AUTHOR'S POPULAR EDITION

SPEECHES

On Questions of Public Policy

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN BRIGHT, M.P

Edited by

JAMES E. THOROLD ROGERS

'Be Just and Fear not'

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PREFACE.

THE speeches which have been selected for publication in this volume possess a value, as examples of the art of public speaking, which no person will be likely to underrate. Those who may differ from Mr. Bright's theory of the public good will have no difficulty in acknowledging the clearness of his diction, the skill with which he arranges his arguments, the vigour of his style, the persuasiveness of his reasoning, and above all, the perfect candour and sincerity with which he expresses his political convictions.

It seems likely that the course of events in this country will lead those, who may desire to possess influence in the conduct of public affairs, to study the art of public speaking. If so, nothing which can be found in English literature will aid the aspirant after this great faculty more than the careful and reiterated perusal of the speeches contained in this volume. Tried indeed by the effect produced upon any audience by their easy flow and perfect clearness, or analysed by any of those systems of criticism which under the name of 'rhetoric' have been saved to us from the learning of the ancient world, these speeches would be admitted to satisfy either process.

This is not the occasion on which to point out the causes which confer so great an artistic value on these compositions; which give them now, and will give them hereafter, so high a place in English literature. At the present time nearly a hundred millions of the earth's inhabitants speak the English tongue. A century hence, and it will probably be the speech of nearly half the inhabitants of the globe. I think that no master of that language will occupy a loftier position than Mr. Bright; that no speaker will teach with greater exactness the noblest and rarest of the social arts, the art of clear and persuasive exposition. But before this art can be attained (so said the greatest critic that the world has known), it is necessary that the speaker should secure the sympathies of his audience, should convince them of his statesmanship, should show that he is free from any taint of self-interest or dissimulation. These conditions of public trust still form, as heretofore, in every country of free thought and free speech, the foundation of a good reputation

and of personal influence. It is with the fact that such are the characteristics of my friend's eloquence, that I have been strongly impressed in collecting and editing the materials of this volume.

Since the days of those men of renown who lived through the first half of the seventeenth century, when the liveliest religious feeling was joined to the loftiest patriotism, and men laboured for their conscience and their country, England has witnessed no political career like that of Cobden and Bright. Cobden's death was a great loss to his country, for it occurred at a time when England could ill spare a conscientious statesman. Nations, however, cannot be saved by the virtues, nor need they be lost by the vices, of their public men. But Cobden's death was an irreparable loss to his friends—most of all to the friend who had been, in an incessant struggle for public duty and truth, of one heart and of one purpose with him.

Those who have been familiar with Cobden's mind know how wide was his knowledge, how true was his judgment of political events. The vast majority of those who followed his public career had but a scanty acquaintance with the resources of his sagacity and foresight. He spoke to the people on a few subjects only. The wisdom of Free Trade; the necessity of Parliamentary Reform; the dangerous tendency of those laws which favour the accumulation of land in few hands; the urgent need for a system of national education; the mischief of the mere military spirit; the prudence of uniting communities by the multiplication of international interests; the abandonment of the policy of diplomatic and military intermeddling; the advocacy, in short, of the common good in place of a spurious patriotism, of selfish, local, or class aims; formed the subject of Cobden's public utterances. But his intimate friends, and in particular his regular correspondents, were aware that his political criticism was as general as it was accurate. The loss then of his wise and lucid counsel was the greatest to the survivor of a personal and a political friendship which was continued uninterruptedly through so long and so active a career.

At the commencement of Mr. Bright's public life, the shortsighted selfishness of a landlords' parliament was afflicting the United Kingdom with a continuous dearth. Labour was starved, and capital was made unproductive by the Corn-laws. The country was tied to a system by which Great Britain and her Colonies deliberately chose the dearest market for their purchases. In the same spirit, the price of freights was wilfully heightened by the Navigation-laws. Important branches of home industry were crippled by prying, vexatious, and wasteful excises. And this system was conceived to be the highest wisdom; or at any rate, to be so invincible a necessity that it could not be avoided or altered without danger. The country, if it were to make its way, could make it only because other nations were servile imitators of our commercial policy, and, in the vain hope of retaliation, were hindering their own progress.

The foreign policy of Great Britain was suspicious and irritating, for it was secret, busy, and meddling, insolent to the weak, conciliatory, even truckling, to

the strong. The very name of diplomacy is and has been odious to English Liberals, for by means of it a reactionary Government could check domestic reforms, and hinder the community of nations indefinitely. The policy of the Foreign Office was constantly directed towards embittering, if not embroiling, the relations between this and other countries. It is difficult to account for these intrigues, except on the ground that successive Governments were anxious to maintain political and social anomalies at home, while they were affecting to support 'the balance of power' abroad. The abandonment of intervention in foreign politics was the beginning of agitation for domestic reforms.

Perhaps no part of the public administration was worse than that of India. The great Company had lost its monopoly of trade in the Eastern seas, but retained its administrative powers over the subject races and dependent princes of India. Its system of finance was wasteful and oppressive. Its policy was that on aggression and annexation. In practice, the Government was irresponsible. Nobody listened to Indian affairs in Parliament, except on rare occasions, or for party purposes. The Governor-General did as he pleased. The President of the Board of Control did as he pleased. If the reader wishes to see how the former acted, Mr. Cobden's pamphlet, 'How Wars are got up in India,' will enlighten him. If it be necessary to inquire what the policy of the latter might be, the disastrous and disgraceful Affghan War is an illustration. Never perhaps was a war commenced more recklessly. It is certain that when loss and dishonour fell on the English arms, the statesmen who recommended and insisted on the war tried to screen themselves from just blame by the basest arts.

The internal resources of India were utterly neglected. The Company collected part of its revenue from a land-tax, levied in the worst shape. In order to secure an income through a monopoly, it constrained the cultivation of certain drugs for which there was a foreign demand; and neglected to encourage the cultivation of cotton, for which the home demand was wellnigh boundless, and to which the Indian supply might be made to correspond. The Company constructed neither road nor canal. It did nothing towards maintaining the means of communication which even the native governments had adopted. It suffered the ancient roads and tanks to fall into decay. It neglected to educate the native gentry, much more the people. In brief, the policy of the Company in dealing with India was the policy of Old Spain with her Transatlantic possessions, only that it was more jealous and illiberal.

Against these social and political evils, and many others which might be enumerated, a very small body of true and resolute statesmen arrayed themselves. Among these statesmen the most eminent were the two chiefs of the Anti-Corn-law agitation. Never did men lead a hope which seemed more forlorn. They had as opponents nearly the whole Upper House of Parliament, a powerful and compact party in the Lower. The Established Church was, of course, against them. The London newspapers, at that time almost the only political power in the press,

were against them. The 'educated' classes were against them. Many of the working people were unfriendly to them, for the Chartists believed that the repeal of the Corn-laws would lower the price of labour. After a long struggle they gained the day; for an accident, the Irish famine, rendered a change in the Corn-laws inevitable. But had it not been for the organisation of the League, the accident would have had no effect; for it is a rule in the philosophy of politics that an accident is valuable only when the machinery for making use of the accident is at hand. *Calamities never teach wisdom to fools, they render it possible that* the wise should avail themselves of the emergency.

A similar calamity, long foreseen by prudent men, caused the political extinction of the East India Company. The joint action of the Board of Control and the Directors led to the Indian mutiny. The suppression of the Indian mutiny led to the suppression of the Leadenhall Street Divan. Another calamity, also foreseen by statesmen, the outbreak of the American Civil War, gave India commercial hope, and retrieved the finances which the Company's rule had thrown into hopeless disorder.

I have selected the speeches contained in this volume, with a view to supplying the public with the evidence on which Mr. Bright's friends assert his right to a place in the front rank of English statesmen. I suppose that there is no better evidence of statesmanship than prescience; that no fuller confirmation of this evidence can be found than in the popular acceptance of those principles which were once unpopular and discredited. A short time since, Lord Derby said *that Mr. Bright was the real leader of the Opposition. It is true that he has given* great aid to that opposition which Lord Derby and his friends have often encountered, and by which, to their great discredit, but to their great advantage, they have been constantly defeated. If Lord Derby is in the right, Mr. Bright is the leader of the People, while his Lordship represents a party which is reckless because it is desperate. The policy which Mr. Bright has advocated in these pages, and throughout a quarter of a century, a policy from which he has never swerved, has at last been accepted by the nation, despite the constant resistance of Lord Derby and his friends. It embodies the national will, because it has attacked, and in many cases vanquished, institutions and laws which have become unpopular, because they have been manifestly mischievous and destructive. No one knows better how conservative and tolerant is public opinion in England towards traditional institutions, than Mr. Bright does; or how indifferent the nation is to attacks on an untenable practice and a bad law, until it awakens to the fact that the law or the practice is ruinous.

Mr. Bright's political opinions have not been adopted because they were popular. He was skilfully, and for a time successfully, maligned by Lord Palmerston, on account of his persevering resistance to the policy of the Russian War. But it is probable that the views he entertained at that time will find more enduring acceptance than those which Lord Palmerston and Lord Palmerston's colleagues promul-

gated, and that he has done more to deface that Moloch, 'the balance of power,' than any other man living. Shortly after the beginning of the Planters' War, almost all the upper, and many of the middle classes, sympathised with the Slave-owners' conspiracy. Everybody knows which side Mr. Bright took, and how judicious and far-sighted he was in taking it. But everybody should remember also how, when Mr. Bright pointed out the consequences likely to ensue from the cruise of the *Alabama*, he was insulted by Mr. Laird in the House of Commons; the Mr. Laird who launched the *Alabama*, who has been the means of creating bitter enmity between the people of this country and of the United States, and has contrived to invest the unlawful speculation of a shipbuilder with the dignity of an international difficulty, to make it the material for an unsettled diplomatic question.

There are many social and political reforms, destined, it may be hoped, to become matter of debate and action in a Reformed Parliament, towards the accomplishment of which Mr. Bright has powerfully contributed. There is that without which Reform is a fraud, the redistribution of seats; that without which it is a sham, the ballot; that without which it is possibly a danger, a system of national education, which should be, if not compulsory, so cogently expedient that it cannot be rejected. There is the great question of the distribution of land, its occupancy, and its relief from that pestilent system of game-preserving which robs the farmer of his profit and the people of their home supplies. There is the pacification of Ireland. The only consolation which can be gathered from the condition of that unhappy country is, that reforms, which are highly expedient in Great Britain, are vital in Ireland, and that they therefore become familiar to the public mind. There is the development of international amity and good-will, first between ourselves and the people of our own race, next between all nations. There is the recognition of public duty to inferior or subject races, a duty which was grievously transgressed before and after the Indian mutiny, and has been still more atrociously outraged in the Jamaica massacre. Upon these and similar matters, no man who wishes to deserve the reputation of a just and wise statesman,—in other words, to fulfil the highest and greatest function which man can render to man,—can find a worthier study than the public career of an Englishman whose guiding principle throughout his whole life has been his favourite motto, 'Be just and fear not.'

I have divided the speeches contained in this volume into groups. The materials for selection are so abundant, that I have been constrained to omit many a speech which is worthy of careful perusal. I have naturally given prominence to those subjects with which Mr. Bright has been especially identified, as, for example, India, America, Ireland, and Parliamentary Reform. But nearly every topic of great public interest on which Mr. Bright has spoken is represented in this volume.

A statement of the views entertained by an eminent politician, who wields a vast influence in the country, is always valuable. It is more valuable when the utterances are profound, consistent, candid. It is most valuable at a crisis when the

people of these islands are invited to take part in a contest where the broad principles of truth, honour, and justice are arrayed on one side, and their victory is threatened by those false cries, those reckless calumnies, those impudent evasions which form the party weapons of desperate and unscrupulous men.

All the speeches in this volume have been revised by Mr. Bright. The Editor is responsible for their selection, for this Preface, and for the Index.

JAMES E. THOROLD ROGERS.

OXFORD, *June* 30, 1868.

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INDIA.

I.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 3, 1853.

From Hansard.

[The ministerial measure for the government of India was introduced by Sir Charles Wood on June 3, 1853. The particulars of the Bill were as follows: The Government proposed that for the future the relations between the Directors and the Board of Control should be unchanged, but that the constitution of the former should be altered and its patronage curtailed. It reduced the number of the Members of the Court from twenty-four to eighteen, of whom twelve were to be elected as before, and six nominated by the Crown from Indian servants who had been ten years in the service of the Crown or the Company. One-third of this number was to go out every second year, but to be re-eligible. Nominations by favour were to be abolished. The governorship of Bengal was to be separated from the office of Governor-General. The legislative council was to be improved and enlarged, the number to be twelve. The Bill passed the House of Lords on June 13.]

I FEEL a considerable disadvantage in rising to address the House after having listened for upwards of five hours to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. But the question is one, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, of first-rate importance; and as I happen from a variety of circumstances to have paid some attention to it, and to have formed some strong opinions in regard to it, I am unwilling even that the Bill should be brought in, or that this opportunity should pass, without saying something, which will be partly in reply to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and partly by way of comment on the plan which he has submitted to the House. There is, as it appears to me, great inconsistency between the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and that which he proposes should be done; because, really, if we take his speech as a true and faithful statement of the condition of India, and of the past proceedings of the Government in that country, our conviction must be that the right hon. Gentleman will be greatly to be blamed in making any alteration in that Government. At the same time, if it be not a faithful portraiture of the Government, and of its transactions in India, then what the right hon. Gentleman proposes to do in regard to the home administration of that country is altogether insufficient for the occasion. I cannot on the present occasion go into many of the details on which the right hon. Gentleman has touched; but the observations which I have to make will refer to matters of government, and those will be confined chiefly to th[illegible] organisation of the home admin[illegible]st tion. I am not much surprised [illegible]d of Government should have take[illegible]ous to will [illegible]all a very unsatisfac[illegible]any such with regard to the meas[illegible]e twenty propounded, because the[illegible]te the Board not seem exactly to [illegible]just about as [illegible]ty-four persons

ought to do from the very first moment that this question was brought before them. I do not allude to the whole of the Treasury bench, but I refer particularly to the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), because he was at the head of the Government when this question was first brought before them. Lord Broughton, then Sir John Hobhouse, was at that time the President of the Board of Control, and he was not in favour of a Committee to inquire into the past government and present condition of India. Shortly afterwards, however, it was considered by the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) that it would be desirable to have such a Committee appointed. A Committee was appointed, and it sat. But at the commencement of the present Session the noble Lord intimated very distinctly, in answer to a question which I put to him, and which seemed to make the noble Lord unnecessarily angry, that it was the intention of the Government to legislate, and in such a way as to leave the Indian Government almost entirely the same as it had hitherto been. ['No, no!'] Well, I thought that the noble Lord said so, and in corroboration of that I may mention that the noble Lord quoted—and I believe that it was the noble Lord's only authority—the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford (Mr. Herries), who considered that no material change was required in the constitution of the home Indian Government. Well, when the noble Lord made that announcement, considerable dissatisfaction was manifested on both sides of the House, some hon. Members speaking in favour of a delay of one, two, or three years, or declaring themselves strongly against the present constitution of the Indian Government. However, from that time Ind this, various rumours were afloat, everybody was confident one week re would be no legislation, o tponement; in another wee ht that there was to be a measure (which last re- . I never believed); and the week after that people were again led to the conclusion that there would be a measure introduced such as the one this night submitted to the House. Again, it was understood so lately as last Saturday that there would be no legislation on the subject, excepting a mere temporary measure for a postponement. I confess that I was myself taken in by that announcement. On Monday the hon. Member for Poole (Mr. Danby Seymour) gave notice of a question on the same subject, and he was requested not to ask it till Tuesday. On Tuesday there was a Cabinet Council, and whether there was a change of opinion then I know not, but I presume that there was. The opinion that was confidently expressed on Saturday gave way to a new opinion, and the noble Lord announced that legislation would be proceeded with immediately. All this indicates that there was a good deal of vacillation on the part of the Government. At last, however, has come the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control. There were some good things in it, no doubt. I do not suppose that any man could stand up, and go on speaking for five hours, without saying something that was useful. But as to the main question on which this matter rests, I do not believe that the plan which the Government proposes to substitute will be one particle better than that which exists at the present moment.

With regard to the question of patronage, I admit, so far as that goes, that the plan proposed by the right hon. Gentleman will be an improvement on the present system. But I do not understand that the particular arrangement of the covenanted service is to be broken up at all. That is a very important matter, because, although he might throw open the nominations to the Indian service to the free competition of all persons in this country, yet if, when these persons get out to India, they are to become a covenanted service, as that service now is constituted,

and are to go on from beginning to end in a system of promotion by seniority—and they are to be under pretty much the same arrangement as at present—a great deal of the evil now existing will remain; and the continuance of such a body as that will form a great bar to what I am very anxious to see, namely, a very much wider employment of the most intelligent and able men amongst the native population.

The right hon. Gentleman has, in fact, made a long speech wholly in defence of the Indian Government; and I cannot avoid making some remarks upon what he has stated, because I wholly dissent from a large portion of the observations which he has made. But the right hon. Gentleman, above all things, dreads that this matter should be delayed. Now I will just touch upon that point. The right hon. Gentleman has said that he has not met any one who does not consider it highly desirable that the House should legislate upon the subject of the Government of India this year; and that it will be a great evil if such legislation is postponed. In support of this view he produces a private letter from Lord Dalhousie upon the subject. Now I do not consider such evidence as by any means conclusive, because the House knows that Lord Dalhousie has been connected with the system that now exists. That noble Earl is also surrounded by persons who are themselves interested in maintaining the present system. From his elevated position also in India—I do not mean his location at Simlah—but from his being by his station removed from the mass of the European population, and still more removed from the native population, I do not think it at all likely that Lord Dalhousie will be able to form a sounder opinion upon this question than persons who have never been in India. In my opinion, no evil can possibly arise from creating in the minds of the population of India a feeling that the question of Indian Government is considered by the House of Commons to be a grave and solemn question; and I solemnly believe that if the decision on the question be delayed for two years, so as to enable Parliament to make due inquiries as to the means of establishing a better form of government in India, it will create in the minds of all the intelligent natives of India a feeling of confidence and hope, and that whatever may be done by them in the way of agitation will be rather for the purpose of offering information in the most friendly and generous spirit, than of creating opposition to any Government legislation. However, the question of delay is one which the House in all probability will be called upon to decide on another occasion.

But passing from that subject, I now come to the principle upon which the right hon. Gentleman founded his Motion. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman was throughout that of an advocate of the Indian Government, as at present constituted; and, if Mr. Melville had said everything that could possibly be dragged into the case, he could not have made it more clearly appear than the right hon. Gentleman has done that the Government of India has been uniformly worthy of the confidence of the country. My view of this matter, after a good deal of observation, is, that the Indian Government, composed of two branches, which the right hon. Gentleman does not propose to amalgamate into one, is a Government of secrecy and irresponsibility to a degree that should not be tolerated in a country like this, where we have a constitutional and Parliamentary Government. I have not the least idea in any observations which I may make either in this House or elsewhere of bringing a charge against the East India Company—that is to say, against any individual member of the Board of Directors, as if they were anxious to misgovern India. I never had any such suspicion. I believe that the twenty-four gentlemen who constitute the Board of Directors would act just about as well as any other twenty-four persons

elected by the same process, acting under the same influences, and surrounded by the same difficulties—having to act with another and independent body—the Board of Control. Neither am I hostile to the Board of Control, because I think that the duty imposed upon it is greater than any such body can properly perform. The right hon. Gentleman, the enormous labours of whose office could not be accomplished by any one man, coming into office in December, and having to propose a new Government for India in the month of May or June, must have found it extremely difficult to make himself master of the question. But beyond this the House should bear in mind, that during the last thirty years there has been a new President of the Board of Control every two years. Nay, in the course of last year there were no less than three Presidents of the Board of Control. Thus that Board seems framed in such a manner as to make it altogether impossible that any one man should be able to conduct it in the way in which it ought to be conducted. Beyond this, the President of that Board has to act in conjunction with the Court of Directors. Without saying anything which would impute blame to any party, it must be obvious that two such bodies combined can never carry on the government of India wisely, and in accordance with those principles which have been found necessary in the government of this country. The right hon. Gentleman has been obliged to admit that the theory of the old Government of India was one which could not be defended, and that everybody considers it ridiculous and childish. I am not at all certain that the one that is going to be established is in any degree better. It was in 1784 that this form of government was established, amid the fight of factions. In 1813 it was continued for twenty years longer, during a time when the country was involved in desperate hostilities with France. In 1833 another Bill, continuing that form of government, passed through Parliament immediately after the hurricane which carried the Reform Bill. All these circumstances rendered it difficult for the Government, however honestly disposed, to pass the best measure for the government of India. But all the difficulties which then existed appear to me wholly to have vanished. Never has any question come before Parliament more entirely free from a complication of that nature, or one which the House has the opportunity of more quietly and calmly considering, than the question now before them.

I should have been pleased if the right hon. Gentleman had given the House the testimony of some two or three persons on his own side of the question. But, as he has not done so, I will trouble the House by referring to some authorities in support of my own views. I will first refer to the work of Mr. Campbell, which has already been quoted by the right hon. Gentleman. It is a very interesting book, and gives a great deal of information. That writer says—

'The division of authority between the Board of Control and the Court of Directors, the large number of directors, and the peculiar system by which measures are originated in the Court, sent for approval to the Board, then back again to the Court, and so on, render all deliverances very slow and difficult; and when a measure is discussed in India, the announcement that it has been referred to the Court of Directors is often regarded as an indefinite postponement. In fact, it is evident that (able and experienced as are many of the individual directors) twenty-four directors in one place, and a Board of Control in another, are not likely very speedily to unite in one opinion upon any doubtful point.'

That, I think, is likely to be the opinion of any man on the Government of India. There is another authority to which I will refer, Mr. Kaye, who has also written a very good book. It was actually distributed by the Court of Directors; I have therefore a right to consider it a fair representation of their

views of what was done, especially as the Chairman of the Court has given me a copy of the book. Mr. Kaye, in referring to the double Government which existed in Bengal in 1772, makes use of these expressions. When I first read them, I thought they were a quotation from my own speeches:—

'But enlightened as were the instructions thus issued to the supervisors, the supervision was wholly inadequate to the requirements of the case. The double Government, as I have shown, did not work well. It was altogether a sham and an imposture. It was soon to be demolished at a blow. . . . The double Government had, by this time, fulfilled its mission. It had introduced an incredible amount of disorder and corruption into the State, and of poverty and wretchedness among the people; it had embarrassed our finances, and soiled our character, and was now to be openly recognised as a failure.'

This is only as to Bengal. The following are the words he uses in respect to the double Government at home:—

'In respect of all transactions with foreign Powers—all matters bearing upon questions of peace and war—the President of the Board of Control has authority to originate such measures as he and his colleagues in the Ministry may consider expedient. In such cases he acts presumedly in concert with the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors—a body composed of the chairman, deputy-chairman, and senior member of the Court. The Secret Committee sign the despatches which emanate from the Board, but they have no power to withhold or to alter them. They have not even the power to record their dissent. In fact, the functions of the Committee are only those which, to use the words of a distinguished member of the Court (the late Mr. Tucker), who deplored the mystery and the mockery of a system which obscures responsibility and deludes public opinion, could as well be performed "by a secretary and a seal."'

Further on he says—

'In judging of responsibility, we should remember that the whole foreign policy of the East India Company is regulated by the Board of Control; that in the solution of the most vital questions—questions of peace and war—affecting the finances of the country, and, therefore, the means of internal improvement, the Court of Directors have no more power than the mayor and aldermen of any corporate town. India depends less on the will of the twenty-four than on one man's caprice—here to-day and gone to-morrow—knocked over by a gust of Parliamentary uncertainty—the mistaken tactics of a leader, or negligence of a whipper-in. The past history of India is a history of revenue wasted and domestic improvement obstructed by war.'

This is very much what I complain of. I admit the right of the East India Company to complain of many things done by the Board of Control; and I am of opinion, that if the House left the two bodies to combat one another, they would at last come to an accurate perception of what they both are. The East India Company accused the Board of Control of making wars and squandering the revenue which the Company collected. But Mr. Kaye said that Mr. Tucker deplored the mystery and the mockery of a system which obscured responsibility and deluded public opinion. It is because of this concealment, of this delusion practised upon public opinion, of this evasion of public responsibility and Parliamentary control, that you have a state of things in India which the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Mangles) has described, when he says that the Company manages the revenues, collects the taxes, and gets from 20,000,000*l.* to 30,000,000*l.* a-year, and nobody knows how much more. But, whatever it is, such is the system of foreign policy pursued by the Board of Control—that is to say, by the gentlemen who drop down there for six or eight or twelve months, never beyond two years—that, whatever revenues are collected, they are squandered on unnecessary and ruinous wars, till the country is brought to

a state of embarrassment and threatened bankruptcy. That is the real point which the House will have to consider.

With regard to some of the details of the Government plan, we should no doubt all agree: but this question of divided responsibility, of concealed responsibility, and of no responsibility whatever, that is the real pith of the matter. The House should take care not to be diverted from that question. [Mr. Mangles: 'Produce your own plan.'] An hon. Gentleman has asked me to produce my plan. I will not comply with that request, but will follow the example of a right hon. Gentleman, a great authority in this House, who once said, when similarly challenged, that he should produce his plan when he was called in. I believe that the plan before the House to-night was concocted by the Board of Control and the hon. Member for Guildford and his Colleagues; I shall, therefore, confine myself at present to the discussion of that plan. Some persons are disposed very much (at least I am afraid so) to undervalue the particular point which I am endeavouring to bring before the House; and they seem to fancy that it does not much matter what shall be the form of government in India, since the population of that country will always be in a condition of great impoverishment and much suffering; and that whatever is done must be done there, and that after all—after having conquered 100,000,000 of people—it is not in our power to interfere for the improvement of their condition. Mr. Kaye, in his book, commences the first chapters with a very depreciating account of the character of the Mogul Princes, with a view to show that the condition of the people of India was at least as unfavourable under them as under British rule. I will cite one or two cases from witnesses for whose testimony the right hon. Gentleman (Sir C. Wood) must have respect. Mr. Marshman is a gentleman who is well known as possessing a considerable amount of information on Indian affairs, and has, I presume, come over on purpose to give his evidence on the subject. He was editor of a newspaper which was generally considered throughout India to be the organ of the Government; in that newspaper, the *Friend of India*, bearing the date 1st April, 1852, the following statement appears:—

'No one has ever attempted to contradict the fact that the condition of the Bengal peasantry is almost as wretched and degraded as it is possible to conceive—*living in the most miserable hovels*, scarcely fit for a dog-kennel, covered with tattered rags, and unable, in too many instances, to procure more than a single meal a-day for himself and family. The Bengal ryot knows nothing of the most ordinary comforts of life. We speak without exaggeration when we affirm, that if the real condition of those who raise the harvest, which yields between 3,000,000*l.* and 4,000,000*l.* a-year, was fully known, it would make the ears of one who heard thereof tingle.'

It has been said that in the Bengal Presidency the natives are in a better condition than in the other Presidencies; and I recollect that when I served on the Cotton Committee, the evidence taken before it being confined to the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, it was then said that if evidence had been taken about the Bengal Presidency it would have appeared that the condition of the natives was better. But I believe that it is very much the same in all the Presidencies. I must say that it is my belief that if a country be found possessing a most fertile soil, and capable of bearing every variety of production, and that, notwithstanding, the people are in a state of extreme destitution and suffering, the chances are that there is some fundamental error in the government of that country. The people of India have been subjected by us, and how to govern them in an efficient and beneficial manner is one of the most important points for the consideration of the House. From the Report of the Indian Cotton Committee it appears that

nearly every witness—and the witnesses were nearly all servants of the Company—gave evidence as to the state of destitution in which the cultivators of the soil lived. They were in such an abject condition that they were obliged to give 40 or 50 per cent. to borrow money to enable them to put seed into the ground. I can, if it were necessary, bring any amount of evidence to prove the miserable condition of the cultivators, and that in many places they have been compelled to part with their personal ornaments. Gentlemen who have written upon their condition have drawn a frightful picture, and have represented the persons employed to collect the revenue as coming upon the unhappy cultivators like locusts, and devouring everything. With regard to the consumption of salt, looking at the *Friend of India*, of April 14, 1853, it appears that it is on the decline. In the year 1849-50, the consumption was 205,517 tons; in 1850-51, 186,410 tons; and in 1851-2, 146,069 tons. Thus, in the short period of three years, there has been a decrease in the consumption amounting to 59,448 tons, which will involve a loss to the revenue of 416,136*l*.[1] Salt is one of those articles that people in India will use as much of as they can afford, and the diminution in the consumption appears to me to be a decided proof of the declining condition of the population, and that must affect adversely the revenue of the Indian Government. Now there is another point to which the right hon. Gentleman has slightly alluded; it is connected with the administration of justice, and I will read from the *Friend of India* a case illustrative of the efficiency of the police. The statement is so extraordinary that it would be incredible but for the circumstance of its having appeared in such a respectable journal:—

'The affair itself is sufficiently uninteresting. A native Zemindar had, or fancied he had, some paper rights over certain lands occupied by a European planter, and, as a necessary consequence, sent a body of armed retainers to attack his factory. The European resisted in the same fashion by calling out his retainers. There was a pitched battle, and several persons were wounded, if not slain; while the Darogah, the appointed guardian of the peace, sat on the roof of a neighbouring hut and looked on with an interest, the keenness of which was probably not diminished by the fact of his own immunity from the pains and perils of the conflict. There has been a judicial investigation, and somebody will probably be punished, if not by actual sentence, by the necessary disbursement of fees and douceurs, but the evil will not be thereby suppressed or even abated. The incident, trifling as it may appear—and the fact that it is trifling is no slight evidence of a disorganised state of society—is an epitome in small type of our Bengal police history. On all sides, and in every instance, we have the same picture—great offences, the police indifferent or inefficient, judicial investigations protracted till the sufferers regret that they did not patiently endure the injury, and somebody punished, but no visible abatement of the crime. The fact is, and it is beginning at last to be acknowledged everywhere, except perhaps at home, that Bengal does not need so much a "reform" or reorganisation of the police, as a police, a body of some kind, specially organised for the preservation of order. Why the change is so long postponed, no one, not familiar with the *arcana* of Leadenhall-street and Cannon-row, can readily explain.'

Mr. Marshman uses the expression, 'the incident, trifling as it may appear;' but I will ask the House if they can conceive a state of society in a country under the Government of England where a scene of violence such as has been described could be considered trifling?

The right hon. Gentleman has, while admitting that the want of roads in some districts of India is a great evil, endeavoured to show that a great deal

[1] The *Friend of India* was incorrect in this statement: the real decline in the consumption of salt was about 12,000 tons.

has been done to remedy the deficiency, and that on some roads the mails travel as fast as ten miles an hour. Now, I believe that if the speed were taken at five miles an hour, it would be nearer the truth; and I will beg the House to excuse me if I read another extract from the *Friend of India* of April 14, 1853:—

'The Grand Trunk, however, is the only road upon which a good speed has been attained, remarks being attached to all of the remainder strongly indicative of the want of improved means of communication. From Shergotty to Gyah, and Gyah to Patna, for instance, the pace is four miles and a half an hour; but then "the road is cutcha, and the slightest shower of rain renders it puddly and impracticable for speedy transit." From Patna to Benares the official account is the same, but the rate increases at one stage to five miles and a half. The southern roads are, however, in the worst condition, the mails travelling to Jellasore at three miles an hour, or less than a groom can walk; and even between Calcutta and Baraset the rate rises to only four miles and a half an hour, while everywhere we have such notices as "road intersected by numerous unbridged rivers and nullahs," "road has not been repaired for these many years," "road not repaired for years," the "road in so bad a state, and so much intersected by rivers and nullahs, that no great improvement in the speed of the mails can be effected." And yet the surplus Ferry Funds might, one would think, if economically administered, be sufficient to pay at least for the maintenance of the roads already in existence. New roads, we fear, are hopeless until Parliament fixes a *minimum*, which must be expended on them; and even then it may be allowed to accumulate, as the Parliamentary grant for education has done at Madras.'

The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the subject of irrigation; and I hold in my hand an extract from the Report of the Commission which inquired into the subject. The Report states that—

'The loss of revenue by the famine of 1832–33 is estimated at least at 1,000,000*l.* sterling; the loss of property at a far greater amount; of life, at 200,000 or 300,000; and of cattle, at 200,000 at the lowest, in Guntore alone, besides the ruin of 70,000 houses. The famine of the Northern Circars in 1833, and that of the north-western provinces of India at a later period, prove with irresistible force that irrigation in this country is properly a question, not of profit, but of existence.'

The right hon. Gentleman has also quoted from a Report by Colonel Cotton on the subject of the embankment of the Kistna. Now, the embankment of the Kistna has been recommended as far back as the year 1792, and from that time has been repeatedly brought forward. The whole estimate for it is but 155,000*l.*, and it was not until September, 1852, that the preliminary operations were commenced. I find this officer stating with respect to the district of Rajamundry, that if a particular improvement that had been recommended above twenty years ago had been carried out, it would have saved the lives of upwards of 100,000 persons who perished in the famine of 1837. I say that such facts as these are a justification of stronger language than any in which I have indulged in reference to the neglect of the Indian Government whether in this House or out of it. The right hon. Gentleman candidly informs us that this very embankment has been recently stopped by order of the Madras Government, because the money was wanted for other purposes—the Burmese war, no doubt. In the year 1849 it was reported that Colonel Cotton wrote a despatch to the Madras Government, in which, after mentioning facts connected with the famines, he insisted, in strong and indignant language, that the improvements should go on. I believe that there was an allusion in the letter to the awkward look these things would have, pending the discussions on the Government of India, and I understand that it was agreed that the original letter, which countermanded the improvements, should be withdrawn, and

that then the remonstrance from Colonel Cotton should also be withdrawn. A gentleman who has been in the Company's service, and who has for some time been engaged in improvements, chiefly in irrigation, writes in a private letter as follows:—

'From my late investigations on this subject, I feel convinced that the state of our communications is the most important subject which calls for consideration. I reckon that India now pays, for want of cheap transit, a sum equal to the whole of the taxes; so that by reducing its cost to a tenth, which might easily be done, we should as good as abolish all taxes. I trust the Committees in England are going on well, in spite of the unbecoming efforts which have been made to circumscribe and quash their proceedings. Woe be to India, indeed, if this opportunity is lost! Much will depend upon you—

(the letter was not addressed to myself)—

and others now in England, who know India, and have a single eye to its welfare. It behoves you to do your utmost to improve this most critical time, and may God in his mercy overrule all the efforts of man for its good! What abominations, villanies, and idiotcies there still are in our system! Is there no hope, no possibility, of infusing a little fresh blood from some purer source into these bodies?

(the ruling authorities).

It is quite clear that no radical improvement can take place till some influences can be applied to stimulate our rulers to more healthy, wholesome action; health can never be looked for in a body constituted as the Court of Directors now is; nothing but torpid disease can be expected as matters now stand.'

With respect to the administration of justice, I shall not go at any length into that subject, because I hope it will be taken up by some other Gentleman much more competent than myself, and I trust that a sufficient answer will be given to what has been stated by the right hon. Gentleman. However, as far as I am able to understand, there appears to be throughout the whole of India, on the part of the European population, an absolute terror of coming under the Company's Courts for any object whatever. Within the last fortnight I have had a conversation with a gentleman who has seen a long period of service in India, and he declared it was hopeless to expect that Englishmen would ever invest their property in India under any circumstances which placed their interests at the disposal of those courts of justice. That is one reason why there appears no increase in the number of Europeans or Englishmen who settle in the interior of India for the purpose of investing their capital there. The right hon. Gentleman endeavoured to make an excuse on the ground that the Law Commission had done nothing. I was not in the House when the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay) brought forward the Bill of 1833, but I understand it was stated that the Law Commission was to do wonders; yet now we have the evidence of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control, that the Report of the Law Commission has ever since been going backwards and forwards, like an unsettled spirit, between this country and India. Mr. Cameron, in his evidence, said (I suppose it is slumbering somewhere on the shelves in the East India House) that the Court of Directors actually sneered at the propositions of their officers for enactments of any kind, and that it was evidently their object to gradually extinguish the Commission altogether. Yet the evidence of Mr. Cameron went to show the extraordinary complication and confusion of the law and law administration over all the British dominions in India. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control also referred to the statistics laid before the public; but I want to know why Colonel Sykes' statistical tables are not before the House. They are at the India House;

but a journey to Leadenhall-street seems to be as long as one to India, and one can as soon get a communication by the overland mail as any information from the India House. What did Colonel Sykes say, with respect to a subject referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, who had given the House to suppose that a great deal had been done in respect to improvements in India? Colonel Sykes stated that in fifteen years, from 1838 to 1852, the average expenditure throughout the whole of India on public works, including roads, bridges, tanks, and canals, was 299,732*l.* The north-west appeared to be the pet district; and in 1851 the total expenditure was 334,000*l.*, of which the north-west district had 240,000*l.* In 1852 the estimate was 693,000*l.*, of which the north-west district was to have 492,000*l.*, leaving only 94,000*l.* in 1851, and 201,000*l.* in 1852, for public works of all kinds in the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, with a population of 70,000,000 souls. The right hon. Gentleman then referred to the exports from this country, and the increase of trade with India; and a kindred subject to that was the mode in which Englishmen settle in India. What I want to show is, that the reason why so little is done with India by Englishmen is, that there does not exist in that country the same security for their investments as in almost every other country in the world. I recollect receiving from Mr. Mackay, who was sent out by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, a letter expressing his amazement on finding that in the interior of India an Englishman was hardly known, unless he now and then made his appearance as a tax collector. The following Return shows in what small numbers Europeans resort to India:—

'British-born subjects in India not in the service of the Queen or the Company:—

Bengal	6,749
Madras	1,661
Bombay	1,596
	10,006

'In the interior of the country, engaged in agriculture or manufactures:—

Bengal	273
Madras	37
Bombay	7
	317'

I cannot believe, if the United States had been the possessors of India, but that where there are tens of Europeans now in that country there would have been, not hundreds, but thousands of the people of America. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the exports to India, and wanted to show how large they were. Certainly they have increased very much, because they started from nothing at all. Before the opening of the trade, the Court of Proprietors, by resolution, declared that it was quite a delusion to suppose it possible to increase the trade with India. In 1850 the total exports to India from Great Britain and Ireland were 8,024,000*l.*, of which cotton goods alone amounted to 5,220,000*l.*, leaving 2,804,000*l.* for the total exports from Great Britain and Ireland upon all other branches of industry other than cotton. Now, let the House make a comparison with another country, one with which a moderately fair comparison might be made. Brazil has a population of 7,500,000 souls, half of whom are reckoned to be slaves, yet the consumption of British goods is greater in Brazil, in proportion to the population, than in India—the former country, with a population of 7,500,000, taking British goods to the amount of 2,500,000*l.* If India took but half the quantity of our exports that Brazil did in proportion to her population, she would take more than five times what she now takes. Yet Brazil is a country upon which we have imposed the payment of exorbitant duties, which we have almost debarred from trading with us by an absurd monopoly in sugar, while India is a country entirely under our own government, and which, we are told, is enjoying the greatest possible blessings under the present ad-

ministration, compared with what it enjoyed under its former rulers. Our exports to India in 1814 were 826,000*l.*; in 1832 they were 3,600,000*l.*; in 1843 they were 6,500,000*l.*; and in 1850 they were 8,000,000*l.* India consumes our exports at the rate of 1*s.* 3*d.* per head; whilst in South America, including the whole of the slave population, the consumption per head is 8*s.* 8*d.* These are facts which the right hon. Baronet is bound to pay serious attention to. For myself, representing, as I do, one of our great seats of manufacturing industry, I feel myself doubly called upon to lose no opportunity of bringing such facts before the House, satisfied as I am that there is no Member of this House so obtuse as not to comprehend how materially the great manufacturing interests of this country are concerned in the question—what shall be the future Government of India?

Another subject requiring close attention on the part of Parliament is the employment of the natives of India in the service of the Government. The right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay), in proposing the Indian Bill of 1833, had dwelt on one of its clauses, which provided that neither colour, nor caste, nor religion, nor place of birth, should be a bar to the employment of persons by the Government; whereas, as matter of fact, from that time to this, no person in India has been so employed, who might not have been equally employed before that clause was enacted; and, from the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control, that it is proposed to keep up the covenanted service system, it is clear that this most objectionable and most offensive state of things is to continue. Mr. Cameron, a gentleman thoroughly versed in the subject, as fourth member of Council in India, President of the Indian Law Commission, and of the Council of Education for Bengal—what does he say on this point? He says—

'The statute of 1833 made the natives of India eligible to all offices under the Company. But during the twenty years that have since elapsed, not one of the natives has been appointed to any office except such as they were eligible to before the statute. It is not, however, of this omission that I should feel justified in complaining, if the Company had shown any disposition to make the natives fit, by the highest European education, for admission to their covenanted service. Their disposition, as far as it can be devised, is of the opposite kind.

'When four students (added Mr. Cameron) were sent to London from the Medical College of Calcutta, under the sanction of Lord Hardinge, in Council, to complete their professional education, the Court of Directors expressed their dissatisfaction; and when a plan for establishing a University at Calcutta, which had been prepared by the Council of Education, was recommended to their adoption by Lord Hardinge, in Council, they answered that the project was premature. As to the Law Commission, I am afraid that the Court of Directors have been accustomed to think of it only with the intention of procuring its abolition.'

Under the Act of 1833 the natives of India were declared to be eligible to any office under the Company. No native has, in the twenty years which have since elapsed, been appointed to any office in pursuance of that clause which he might not have held before the Bill passed, or had it never passed at all. There might not, perhaps, have been so much reason to complain of this circumstance, had the Government of India meanwhile shown a disposition to qualify the natives for the covenanted service; but the fact is that the Government has, on the contrary, manifested a disposition of a totally opposite character. The House must be very cautious not to adopt the glossed and burnished statement of the right hon. Gentleman as exhibiting the real state of things in India; for it is essential, in the highest degree, that in the present critical juncture of things the whole

truth should be known. The right hon. Baronet, towards the close of his speech, has gone into the subject of education, and not so much into that of ecclesiastical establishments in India, but somewhat into that of religion. Now, with reference to education, so far as can be gathered from the Returns before the House—I have sought to obtain Returns of a more specific character, but to no purpose, having received the usual answer in these matters, that there was no time for preparing them—but from the Returns we have before us I find that while the Government has overthrown almost entirely that native education which had subsisted throughout the country so universally that a schoolmaster was as regular a feature in every village as the 'potail' or head man, it has done next to nothing to supply the deficiency which has been created, or to substitute a better system. Out of a population of 100,000,000 natives, we instruct but 25,000 children; out of a gross revenue of 29,000,000*l.* sterling, extracted from that population, we spend but 66,000*l.* in their education. In India, let it be borne in mind, the people are not in the position with regard to providing for their own education which the people of this country enjoy, and the education which they have provided themselves with, the Government has taken from them, supplying no adequate system in its place. The people of India are in a state of poverty, and of decay, unexampled in the annals of the country under their native rulers. From their poverty the Government wrings a gross revenue of more than 29,000,000*l.* sterling, and out of that 29,000,000*l.*, return to them 66,000*l.* per annum for the purposes of education!

What is our ecclesiastical establishment in India? Three bishops and a proportionate number of clergy, costing no less than 101,000*l.* a-year for the sole use of between 50,000 and 60,000 Europeans, nearly one-half of whom, moreover—taking the army—are Roman Catholics. I might add, that in India, the Government showed the same discrimination of which the noble Member for the City of London (Lord J. Russell) seemed to approve so much the other night, for, although they give to one Protestant bishop 4,000*l.* a-year, with 1,200*l.* a-year more for expenses and a ship at his disposal, and to two other Protestant bishops between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.* a-year, they give to the Roman Catholic bishop a paltry sum of about 250*l.* a-year. The East India Company are not, perhaps, herein so much to blame, seeing that they do but follow the example of what is going on in this country.

There is another question—perhaps the most important of all—the question of Indian finance, which, somehow or other, the right hon. Baronet has got over in so very lame a manner, in so particularly confused a style, that, had I not known something of the matter previously, I should have learnt very little from the right hon. Baronet's statement. A former Director of the East India Company has on this subject issued a book—of course, in defence of the Company. Here are two or three facts extracted from this book:—From 1835 to 1851—sixteen years—the entire net taxation of India has produced 340,756,000*l.*; the expenditure on the Government in the same period having been 341,676,000*l.*—an amount somewhat in excess of the revenue. During these sixteen years there has been also expended on public works of all kinds 5,000,000*l.*, and there has been paid, in dividends, to the proprietors of East India stock, 10,080,000*l.*; making a total expenditure of 356,756,000*l.* In the same period the Company has contracted loans to the extent of 16,000,000*l.*; every farthing of which has gone to improvements, the stated extent of which I believe to have been greatly magnified, and to pay the amiable ladies and gentlemen whose votes return to Leadenhall-street those immaculate Directors whom the Government seems so desirous of cherishing. All expenditure for improvements of

every kind, and all dividends to stockholders, have been paid from loans contracted during the last sixteen years; so that the whole revenue has been expended, leaving nothing for improvements and nothing for the Company's dividends. This seems to me a formidable, an alarming state of things.

The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the Indian debt coming upon the people of this country, expressing the opinion that if the Government of India were transferred to the Crown—which assuredly it ought to be—the debt ought so to be transferred. The debt is not in the present Budget, indeed, but it will certainly come before the House. I have already referred to a memorable speech of the late Sir Robert Peel on this subject, in 1842, just after he had come into office, and when, finding the country left by the Whigs with an Exchequer peculiarly discouraging to a Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was about to propose that temporary income-tax which has since become permanent. He said, after referring to the affairs of Canada and China—

'For the purpose of bringing before the House a full and complete view of our financial position, as I promised to do, I feel it to be my duty to refer to a subject which has of late occupied little attention in the House, but which I think might, with advantage to the public, have attracted more of their regard—I refer to the state of Indian finance, a subject which formerly used to be thought not unworthy of the consideration of this House. I am quite aware that there may appear to be no direct and immediate connexion between the finances of India and those of this country; but that would be a superficial view of our relations with India which should omit the consideration of this subject. Depend upon it, if the credit of India should become disordered, if some great exertion should become necessary, then the credit of England must be brought forward to its support, and the collateral and indirect effect of disorders in Indian finances would be felt extensively in this country. Sir, I am sorry to say that Indian finance offers no consolation for the state of finance in this country. I hold in my hand an account of the finances of India, which I have every reason to believe is a correct one. It is made up one month later than our own accounts—to the 5th of May. It states the gross revenue of India, with the charges on it; the interest of the debt; the surplus revenue, and the charges paid on it in England; and there are two columns which contain the net surplus and the net deficit. In the year ending May, 1836, there was a surplus of 1,520,000*l.* from the Indian revenue. In the year ending the 5th of May, 1837, there was a surplus of 1,100,000*l.*, which was reduced rapidly in the year ending May, 1838, to one of 620,000*l.* In the year ending the 5th of May, 1839, the surplus fell to 29,000*l.*; in the year ending the 5th of May, 1840, the balance of the account changed, and so far from there being any surplus, the deficit on the Indian revenue was 2,414,000*l.* I am afraid I cannot calculate the deficit for the year ending May, 1841, though it depends at present partly on estimate, at much less than 2,334,000*l.* The House, then, will bear in mind, that in fulfilment of the duty I have undertaken, I present to them the deficit in this country for the current year to the amount of 2,350,000*l.*, with a certain prospect of a deficit for the next year to the amount of at least 2,470,000*l.*, independently of the increase to be expected on account of China and Affghanistan, and that in India, that great portion of our Empire, I show a deficit on the two last years which will probably not be less than 4,700,000*l.*'—[3 *Hansard*, lxi. 428-9.]

Now, this deficit has in the period since 1842 been growing every year, with the exception of two years, when, from accidental and precarious circumstances, a surplus of between 300,000*l.* and 400,000*l.* was made out. The course of deficit has now, however, been resumed, and there is probably no one in this House or in the country but the

right hon. President of the Board of Control, who does not perceive that the Burmese war will materially aggravate the amount of that deficit. Where is this to end? When the Board of Control was first established, the debt was 8,000,000*l.*; in 1825 it was 25,000,000*l.*; in 1829 it was 34,000,000*l.*; in 1836, 37,000,000*l.*; in 1843, 36,000,000*l.*; in 1849, 44,000,000*l.*; in 1853, 47,000,000*l.*; and now, including the bond debt at home and the debt in India, it is about 51,000,000*l.* The military expenditure of India has increased since the last Charter Act from 8,000,000*l.* a-year to more than 12,000,000*l.* a-year, and now forms no less than 56 per cent. of the whole expenditure. I believe that if the Indian Government would endeavour to improve the condition of the people by attending to economic principles, by establishing better means of communication, by promoting irrigation, and by affording facilities for education, the Indian population would at once be convinced that there was a feeling of sympathy entertained towards them on the part of their rulers and conquerors, and the idea—which I believe prevails very extensively—that we held India more with the object of extorting taxation than of benefiting the people, would speedily be removed.

When I come to consider the amount of the revenue, and its pressure upon the population, I think I can show a state of things existing in India which cannot be paralleled in any other country in the world. The evidence of Mr. Davies and Mr. Stewart, collectors in Guzerat, shows that in that district the actual taxation varies from 60 to 90 per cent. upon the gross produce of the soil. Mr. Campbell calculates the gross revenue of India at about 27,000,000*l.*; and Mr. Kaye, a recent authority, who, I presume, wrote his book at the India House, states that the gross revenue was 29,000,000*l.* The land revenue is 12,000,000*l.* or 13,000,000*l.*; and although the Government took, or intended to take, all the rent, it is not half enough for them, and they are obliged to take as much more from other sources in order to enable them to maintain their establishments. I mention this fact to show the enormous expense of the Indian Government, and the impossibility of avoiding a great and dangerous financial crisis unless some alteration is made in the present system. Mr. Campbell, speaking of the Indian revenues under the Mogul Princes, says—

'The value of food, labour, &c. seems to have been much the same as now—that is, infinitely cheaper than in Europe; and, certainly, in comparison to the price of labour and all articles of consumption, the revenue of the Moguls must have been more effective than that of any modern State—I mean that it enabled them to command more men and luxuries, and to have a greater surplus.'

I would ask the House to imagine that all steam engines, and all applications of mechanical power, were banished from this country; that we were utterly dependent upon mere manual labour. What would you think if the Chancellor of the Exchequer, under such circumstances, endeavoured to levy the same taxation which is now borne by the country? From one end of India to the other, with very trifling exceptions, there is no such thing as a steam engine; but this poor population, without a steam engine, without anything like first-rate tools, are called upon to bear, I will venture to say, the very heaviest taxation under which any people ever suffered with the same means of paying it. Yet the whole of this money, raised from so poor a population, which would in India buy four times as much labour, and four times as much of the productions of the country, as it would obtain in England, is not enough to keep up the establishments of the Government; for during the last sixteen years the Indian Government has borrowed 16,000,000*l.* to pay the dividends to the proprietors in England.

The opium question has been alluded ɔ by the right hon. Gentleman (Sir C. Vood). I must say I do not know any ne connected with China, or at all cquainted with the subject, who is not f opinion that the opium revenue is ery near its termination. Even the avourite authority of the President of ie Board of Control, Mr. Marshman, eclared his opinion that India was on ie verge of a great financial crisis. Whether the present Chinese Govern- ent retains its power, or the insurgents e successful and a new dynasty be stablished, the scruple against the nportation of opium into China from ndia having once been removed, the ansition to the growth of the drug in hina is very easy, and there can arcely be a doubt that opium will on be as extensively cultivated in that ountry as ever it was in India. This ight very soon produce a loss of 000,000*l.* of revenue to the East India ompany. There has already been an nnual deficit in the revenues of the ast India Company for the last fifteen ears; they have to bear the cost of a urmese War; and the annexation of ew territory will only bring upon them n increased charge, for Pegu will pro- ably never repay its expenses, and et they have the prospect of losing 000,000*l.* of their revenue within a ery few years. Now, what would the hancellor of the Exchequer say if the resident of the Board of Control came that House and proposed to raise loan upon the credit of this country r the purpose of maintaining our rritory in India? Would it not be etter at once to ascertain whether the rinciples and policy on which we have therto proceeded have not been faulty? hould we not rather endeavour to re- ice our expenditure, to employ cheaper bour, to increase the means of com- unication in India, which would enable s to dispense with a portion of our oops, and to make it a rule that the overnor-General should have more onour when he came home, for not eing extended by an acre the territory of our Indian possessions, than if he had added a province or a kingdom to them?

The plan proposed by the President of the Board of Control appears to me very closely to resemble that which exists at present. The result, so far as regards the real question, about which the public are most interested, is this, that the twenty-four gentlemen who are directors of the East India Company are, by a process of self-immolation, to be reduced to fifteen. I think this re- duction will be one of the most affecting scenes in the history of the Government of India. As the East India Company keep a writer to record their history, I hope they also keep an artist to give us an historical painting of this great event. There we shall see the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Mangles), the hon. Member for Honiton (Sir J. W. Hogg), one of the hon. Members for the City of London, and the other directors, meeting together, and looking much like shipwrecked men in a boat casting lots who should be thrown overboard. To the fifteen directors who are to remain, three others are to be added, and the result will be that, instead of having twenty-four gentlemen sitting in Leadenhall-street, to manage the affairs in India, there will be eighteen. The present constituency is so bad that nothing the President of the Board of Control can do can make it worse; but as that right hon. Gentle- man finds it impossible to make it better, he lets the constituency remain as it was. The right hon. Baronet proposes that the Crown should appoint six members of the Board who have been at least ten years in India, so that there may at all events be that number of gentlemen at the Board fit for the responsible office in which they are placed. But this is an admission that the remaining twelve members of the Board are not fit for their office. They have two ingredients—the one whole- some, the other poisonous; but there are two drops of poison to one of wholesome nutriment. The right hon. Gentleman mixes them together, and

then wants Parliament and the country to believe that he has proposed a great measure.

As regards the right hon. Gentleman's speech, I must say that I have never heard so great a one—I mean as to length—where the result, so far as the real thing about which people wish to know, was so little. The twelve gentlemen appointed by the present constituency are degraded already by the right hon. Gentleman's declaration, that they are not elected in a satisfactory manner, and that they are not fit persons for the government of India. They are, in fact, bankers and brewers, and men of all sorts, in the City of London, who find it their interest to get into the Court of Directors—no matter by what channel—because it adds to the business of their bank, or whatever else may be the undertaking in which they are engaged; but who have no special qualification for the government of India. If the Government thinks it right to have six good directors, let them abolish the twelve bad ones. Then it appears that the Secret Department is to be retained. Speaking of this, Mr. Kaye, quoting the authority of Mr. Tucker, a distinguished director, said it was no more than a secretary and a seal. Next comes a most extraordinary proposition. Hitherto the directors have undergone all the hardship of governing India for 300*l.* a-year; but the right hon. Gentleman now proposes to raise their wages by 4*l.* per week each. I must say, that if this body is to be salaried at all, and is not to have the profit of the patronage enjoyed by the present Government, nothing can be worse economy than this, with a view to obtaining a body which shall command the respect, and have the amount of influence, requisite for conducting the Government of India. Sixteen of the directors, receiving 500*l.* a-year each—why, they would have to pay their clerks much more!—and the chairman and the deputy-chairman 1,000*l.* a-year each. The whole of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme seems to bear the marks of—I am almost afraid to say what; but he seems to have tried to please every one in framing his great proposition, and at last has landed the House in a sort of half measure, which neither the East India Company nor India wants. If I had made a speech such as the right hon. Gentleman has delivered, and believed what I said, I would leave the Indian Government as it is; but if I thought it necessary to alter the Government, I would do so on principle essentially. The right hon. Gentleman is afraid of bringing the Government of India under the authority of the Crown. What, I should like to know, would have been done if India had been conquered by the troops of the Crown? We should then never have sent some thirty men into a bye-street of London to distribute patronage and govern a great country. The Government of India would then have been made a department of the Government, with a Council and a Minister of State. But it appears that the old system of hocus-pocus is still to be carried on.

This is no question of Manchester against Essex—of town against country—of Church against Nonconformity. It is a question in which we all have an interest, and in which our children may be more deeply interested than we are ourselves. Should anything go wrong with the finances, we must bear the burden; or should the people of India by our treatment be goaded into insurrection, we must reconquer the country, or be ignominiously driven out of it. I will not be a party to a state of things which might lead to the writing of a narrative like this on the history of our relations with that empire. Let the House utterly disregard the predictions of mischief likely to result from such a change in the Government of India as that which I advocate. When the trade was thrown open, and the Company was deprived of the monopoly of carrying, they said the Chinese would poison the tea. There is nothing too outrageous or ridiculous for the Company to say in order to prevent the Legislature from

placing affairs on a more honest footing. I object to the Bill, because—as the right hon. Gentleman admitted—it maintains a double Government. In the unstatesmanlike course which the right hon. Gentleman is pursuing, he will, no doubt, be especially backed by the noble Lord the Member for London. I only wish that some of the younger blood in the Cabinet might have had their way upon this question. Nothing can induce me to believe, after the evidence which is before the public, that this measure has the approbation of an united Cabinet. It is not possible that thirteen sensible gentlemen, who have any pretensions to form a Cabinet, could agree to a measure of this nature. I am more anxious than I can express that Parliament should legislate rightly in this matter. Let us act so at this juncture that it may be said of us hereafter—that whatever crimes England originally committed in conquering India, she at least made the best of her position by governing the country as wisely as possible, and left the records and traces of a humane and liberal sway.

I recollect having heard the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (Viscount Palmerston) deliver in this House one of the best speeches I ever listened to. On that occasion the noble Lord gloried in the proud name of England, and, pointing to the security with which an Englishman might travel abroad, he triumphed in the idea that his countrymen might exclaim, in the spirit of the ancient Roman, *Civis Romanus sum.* Let us not resemble the Romans merely in our national privileges and personal security. The Romans were great conquerors, but where they conquered, they governed wisely. The nations they conquered were impressed so indelibly with the intellectual character of their masters, that, after fourteen centuries of decadence, the traces of civilization are still distinguishable. Why should not we act a similar part in India? There never was a more docile people, never a more tractable nation. The opportunity is present, and the power is not wanting. Let us abandon the policy of aggression, and confine ourselves to a territory ten times the size of France, with a population four times as numerous as that of the United Kingdom. Surely that is enough to satisfy the most gluttonous appetite for glory and supremacy. Educate the people of India, govern them wisely, and gradually the distinctions of caste will disappear, and they will look upon us rather as benefactors than as conquerors. And if we desire to see Christianity, in some form, professed in that country, we shall sooner attain our object by setting the example of a high-toned Christian morality, than by any other means we can employ.

INDIA.

II.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 24, 1858.

From Hansard.

[After the suppression of the Indian mutiny, Lord Palmerston's Government determined to introduce a *Bill* the object of which was to place the possessions of the East India Company under the direct authority of the Crown. This Bill was introduced by Lord Palmerston on February 12. But the Government fell a few days afterwards, on the Conspiracy *Bill*, and Lord Palmerston's *Bill* was withdrawn. On March 26 the new Government introduced their own Bill, which was known as the India Bill No. 2. The chief peculiarity of this Bill was that five members in the proposed council of eighteen should be chosen by the constituencies of the following cities:—London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Belfast. The scheme was unpopular, and Lord Russell proposed that it should be withdrawn, and that resolutions should be passed in a Committee of the whole House, the acceptance of which might prove a guide to the proceedings of the Government. The suggestion was accepted by Mr. Disraeli, and in consequence India Bill No. 3 was brought in, and read a second time on June 24.]

I DO not rise for the purpose of opposing the second reading of this Bill—on the contrary, if any hon. Member thinks proper to divide the House upon it, I shall vote with the noble Lord. I must say, however, that there are many clauses in the Bill to which I entertain serious objections. Some of them will, I hope, be amended as the Bill passes through Committee; but if that is not the case, I can only hope that, as the Bill of 1853 is abandoned in 1858, within the next five years the House of Commons will take some further steps with regard to this question, with the view of simplifying the Government of India as carried on in England. I wish to take this opportunity of making some observations upon the general question of Indian government, which it might have been out of place to have made during the discussion of the various Resolutions which have been agreed to by the House.

I think it must have struck every hon. Member that, while two Governments have proposed great changes with regard to the government of India, no good case has really been made out for such changes in the speeches of the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentleman by whom the two India Bills have been introduced. That opinion, I know, will meet with a response from two or three hon. Gentlemen on this (the Opposition) side of the House. It occurred to me when the noble Lord at the head of the late Government (Viscount Palmerston) introduced his Bill—and I made the observation when the present Chancellor of the Exchequer brought forward his measure—that if the House knew no more of the question than they learned

from the speeches of the Ministers, they could not form any clear notion why it was proposed to overthrow the East India Company. The hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Mangles) has expressed a similar opinion several times during the progress of these discussions. The right hon. Member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham) has also said that the East India Company was being dealt with in a manner in which animals intended for sacrifice were treated in Eastern countries and in ancient times,—they were decked with garlands when they were led out for immolation. That is true; but it does not therefore follow that the House is not quite right in the course it is taking. It must be clear that the moment the House of Commons met this Session there was only one course which the then Government could adopt with reference to this question. A feeling existed throughout the country—I believe I may say it was universal that for a long time past the government of India had not been a good government; that grave errors—if not grievous crimes—had been committed in that country. I think the conscience of the nation had been touched on this question, and it came by a leap, as it were—by an irrepressible instinct—to the conclusion that the East India Company must be abolished, and that another and, as the nation hoped, a better government should be established for that country. There was a general impression, arising from past discussion in Parliament, that the industry of the people of India had been grievously neglected; that there was great reason for complaint with respect to the administration of justice; and that with regard to the wars entered into by the Indian Government, there was much of which the people of England had reason to be ashamed.

It has been said by some that these faults are to be attributed to the Board of Control; but I have never defended the Board of Control. I believe everything the East India Company has said of the Board of Control—to its discredit; and I believe that everything the Board of Control has said to the discredit of the East India Company to be perfectly true. There was also a general impression that the expenditure of the East India Government was excessive; and that it had been proved before more than one Committee that the taxes imposed upon the people of India were onerous to the last degree. These subjects were discussed in 1853, at which time, in my opinion, the change now proposed ought to have been effected. Subsequently the calamitous events of 1857 and 1858 occurred; and the nation came at once to the conclusion—a conclusion which I think no disinterested person could resist—that it was impossible that India and its vast population could any longer be retained under the form of government which has existed up to this period. If, then, a change was inevitable, the question was how it should be accomplished and what should be done. I think it is quite clear that the course the noble Lord has pursued is right—namely, that of insisting that, during this present Session, and without delay, the foundation of all reform in the government of India should be commenced at home, because we cannot take a single step in the direction of any real and permanent improvement in the Indian Government until we have reformed what I may call the basis of that Government by changes to be effected in this country.

What, then, is the change which is proposed, and which ought to be made? For my own part, in considering these questions, I cannot altogether approve the Bill now before the House. What we want with regard to the government of India is that which in common conversation is called 'a little more daylight.' We want more simplicity and more responsibility. I objected to the scheme originally proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer because it did not provide these requisites; that scheme so closely resembled the system we were about to overthrow that I could not bring myself to regard it favourably. In considering the subject before Parlia-

ment met, I asked myself this question:—'Suppose there had never been an East India Company or any such corporation,—suppose India had been conquered by the forces of the Crown, commanded by generals acting under the authority of the Crown,—how should we then have proposed to govern distant dominions of vast extent, and with a population that could scarcely be counted?' I believe such a system of government as has hitherto existed would never have been established; and if such a system had not existed I am convinced that no Minister would have proposed the plan now submitted to the House.

I think the government would have been placed in the hands of a Secretary of State, with his secretaries, clerks, and staffs of officers, or of a small Board, so small as to prevent responsibility from being diffused and divided, if not actually destroyed. I suspect that the only reason why the Country or Parliament can be disposed to approve the large Council now proposed is, that they have seen something like a Council heretofore, formerly of twenty-four, and subsequently of eighteen members, and I believe there is something like timidity on the part of the House, and probably on the part of the Government, which hinders them from making so great a change as I have suggested to the simple plan which would probably have existed had no such body as the East India Company ever been established. I am willing to admit candidly that if the government of India at home should be so greatly simplified it will be necessary that very important changes should be made in the government in India. I agree with the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) that the representatives of the Crown in India must have power as well as responsibility; that they should be enabled to deal with emergencies, and to settle the hundred or the thousand questions that must arise among 100,000,000 of people, without sending 10,000 miles to this country to ask questions which ought to be settled at once by some competent authority on the spot.

There are two modes of governi India, and the hon. Member for Le minster (Mr. Willoughby), who has be a very distinguished servant of the Ea India Company, has publicly express his views upon this question. I ha been very much struck with a no attached to the published report of h speech, referring to the multifario duties discharged by the Directors the East India Company. That no states that—

"A despatch may be received, contai ing 60, or 100, or 200 cases; and th despatch, in itself voluminous, is render more so by *collections attached to it*, co taining copies of all former corresponden on the subject or subjects, and of all lette written thereon by various local office and all papers relating thereto. There h not long since been in the Revenue D partment a despatch with 16,263 pages *collections*. In 1845 *there was one in th* same Department with 46,000 pages, a it was stated that Mr. Canning, some yea since in the House of Commons, mention a military despatch to which were attach 13,511 pages of *collections*."

The hon. Gentleman did not say his speech that anybody at the Ind House ever read all these things. was quite clear that if the Directo were to pretend to go through a waggo load of documents coming to Leade hall-street every year it must be only pretence, and if they want to persuad the House that they give attention t only one-tenth part of these papers the must think the House more credulo than it is in matters of this kind. Th is one mode of governing India. It the mode which has been adopted an the mode which has failed. If we a to have the details settled here, I a perfectly certain we can have no goo government in India. I have alluded o a former occasion to a matter whic occurred in a Committee upstairs. A gentleman who was examined stated th he had undertaken to brew a wholesome beer and quite as good as that exp for the supply of the troops, some

n the Presidency of Madras, for one-ixth of the price paid by Government or that exported to India from England; hat the experiment was completely suc-essful; that the memorandum or record vith regard to it was sent home, no oubt forming part of the thousands f pages to which reference has been nade; and that it was buried in the eap in which it came, because for years othing was heard of a proposition which would have saved the Govern-nent a very large amount annually and pened a new industry to the population nd capital of India. I believe this ystem of government is one of delay nd disappointment—one, actually, of npossibility—one which can by no neans form a complete theory of go-ernment as held by any persons in the House; and that the other, the simpler ystem, which I wish the House to ndertake, would be one of action, pro-ress, and results, with regard to India, uch as we have never yet seen and never an see until there is a complete simpli-cation of the Indian Government in his country.

I come now to the question—and it s for this question that I have wished rincipally to address the House—if at ny time we obtain the simplicity which contend for with regard to the govern-nent at home, what changes will it be esirable to make in the government in ndia? And I would make one obser-ation at this point, that in all the state-nents and arguments which I hope to se, I beg the House to believe that I se them with the greatest possible eference, with the feeling that this is question upon which no man is at ll entitled to dogmatize, that it is a ast question which we all look at as ne we are scarcely capable of handling nd determining. I submit my views o the House because I have considered e subject more or less for many years, nd I believe I am actuated by the sim-le and honest desire of contributing omething to the information and know-ge of Parliament with regard to its upon this great question.

What is it we have to complain of in India? What is it that the people of India, if they spoke by my mouth, have to complain of? They would tell the House that, as a rule, throughout al-most all the Presidencies, and through-out those Presidencies most which have been longest under British rule, the cultivators of the soil, the great body of the population of India, are in a condition of great impoverishment, of great dejection, and of great suffering. I have, on former occasions, quoted to the House the report of a Committee which I obtained ten years ago, upon which sat several members of the Court of Directors; and they all agreed to report as much as I have now stated to the House—the Report being confined chiefly to the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras. If I were now submitting the case of the population of India I would say that the taxes of India are more onerous and oppressive than the taxes of any other country in the world. I think I could demonstrate that pro-position to the House. I would show that industry is neglected by the Go-vernment to a greater extent probably than is the case in any other country in the world which has been for any length of time under what is termed a civilized and Christian government. I should be able to show from the notes and memoranda of eminent men in India, of the Governor of Bengal, Mr. Halliday, for example, that there is not and never has been in any country pretending to be civilized, a condition of things to be compared with that which exists under the police adminis-tration of the province of Bengal. With regard to the courts of justice I may say the same thing. I could quote passages from books written in favour of the Company with all the bias which the strongest friends of the Company can have, in which the writers declare that, precisely in proportion as English courts of justice have extended, have perjury and all the evils which perjury introduces into the administration of justice prevailed throughout the Pre-

sidencies of India. With regard to public works, if I were speaking for the Natives of India, I would state this fact, that in a single English county there are more roads—more travelable roads—than are to be found in the whole of India; and I would say also that the single city of Manchester, in the supply of its inhabitants with the single article of water, has spent a larger sum of money than the East India Company has spent in the fourteen years from 1834 to 1848 in public works of every kind throughout the whole of its vast dominions. I would say that the real activity of the Indian Government has been an activity of conquest and annexation—of conquest and annexation which after a time has led to a fearful catastrophe which has enforced on the House an attention to the question of India, which but for that catastrophe I fear the House would not have given it.

If there were another charge to be made against the past Government of India, it would be with regard to the state of its finances. Where was there a bad Government whose finances were in good order? Where was there a really good Government whose finances were in bad order? Is there a better test in the long run of the condition of a people and the merits of a Government than the state of the finances? And yet not in our own time, but going back through all the pages of Mill or of any other History of India we find the normal condition of the finances of India has been that of deficit and bankruptcy. I maintain that if that be so, the Government is a bad Government. It has cost more to govern India than the Government has been able to extract from the population of India. The Government has not been scrupulous as to the amount of taxes or the mode in which they have been levied; but still, to carry on the government of India according to the system which has heretofore prevailed, more has been required than the Government has been able to extract by any system of taxation known to them from the population over which they have ruled. It has cost more than 30,000,000*l*. a-year to govern India, and the gross revenue being somewhere about 30,000,000*l*., and there being a deficit, the deficit has had to be made up by loans. The Government has obtained all they could from the population; it is not enough, and they have had to borrow from the population and from Europeans at a high rate of interest to make up the sum which has been found to be necessary. They have a debt of 60,000,000*l*.; and it is continually increasing; they always have a loan open; and while their debt is increasing their credit has been falling, because they have not treated their creditors very honourably on one or two occasions, and chiefly, of course, on account of the calamities which have recently happened in India. There is one point with regard to taxation which I wish to explain to the House, and I hope that, in the reforms to which the noble Lord is looking forward, it will not be overlooked. I have said that the gross revenue is 30,000,000*l*. Exclusive of the opium revenue, which is not, strictly speaking, and hardly at all, a tax upon the people, I set down the taxation of the country at something like 25,000,000*l*. Hon. Gentlemen must not compare 25,000,000*l*. of taxation in India with 60,000,000*l*. of taxation in England. They must bear in mind that in India they could have twelve days' labour of a man for the same sum in silver or gold which they have to pay for one day's labour of a man in England; that if, for example, this 25,000,000*l*. were expended in purchasing labour, that sum would purchase twelve times as much in India as in England—that is to say, that the 25,000,000*l*. would purchase as many days' labour in India as 300,000,000*l*. would purchase in England. [An Hon. Member: 'How much is the labour worth?'] That is precisely what I am coming to. If the labour of a man is only worth 2*d*. a-day, they could not expect as much revenue from him as if

it were 2s. a-day. That is just the point to which I wish the hon. Gentleman would turn his attention. We have in England a population which, for the sake of argument, I will call 30,000,000. We have in India a population of 150,000,000. Therefore, the population of India is five times as great as the population of England. We raise in India, reckoning by the value of labour, taxation equivalent to 300,000,000*l.*, which is five times the English revenue. Some one may probably say, therefore, that the taxation in India and in England appears to be about the same, and no great injury is done. But it must be borne in mind that in England we have an incalculable power of steam, of machinery, of modes of transit, roads, canals, railways, and everything which capital and human invention can bring to help the industry of the people; while in India there is nothing of the kind. In India there is scarcely a decent road, the rivers are not bridged, there are comparatively no steam engines, and none of those aids to industry that meet us at every step in Great Britain and Ireland. Suppose steam engines, machinery, and modes of transit abolished in England, how much revenue would the Chancellor of the Exchequer obtain from the people of England? Instead of 60,000,000*l.* a-year, would he get 10,000,000*l.*? I doubt it very much. If the House will follow out the argument, they will come to the conclusion that the taxes of the people of India are oppressive to the last degree, and that the Government which has thus taxed them can be tolerated no longer, and must be put an end to at once and for ever. I wish to say something about the manner in which these great expenses are incurred. The extravagance of the East India Government is notorious to all. I believe there never was any other service under the sun paid at so high a rate as the exclusive Civil Service of the East India Company. Clergymen and missionaries can be got to go out to India for a moderate sum—private soldiers and officers of the army go out for a moderate remuneration—merchants are content to live in the cities of India for a percentage or profit not greatly exceeding the ordinary profits of commerce. But the Civil Service, because it is bound up with those who were raised by it and who dispense the patronage of India, receive a rate of payment which would be incredible if we did not know it to be true, and which, knowing it to be true, we must admit to be monstrous. The East India Government scatters salaries about at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Agra, Lahore, and half a dozen other cities, which are up to the mark of those of the Prime Minister and Secretaries of State in this country. These salaries are framed upon the theory that India is a mine of inexhaustible wealth, although no one has found it to be so but the members of the Civil Service of the East India Company. The policy of the Government is at the bottom of the constant deficit. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has twice recently declared that expenditure depends upon policy. That is as true in India as in England, and it is the policy that has been pursued there which renders the revenue liable to this constantly recurring deficit.

I have come to the conclusion, which many hon. Members probably share with me, that the edifice we have reared in India is too vast. There are few men now, and least of all those connected with the East India Company, who, looking back to the policy that has been pursued, will not be willing to admit that it has not been judicious but hazardous—that territories have been annexed that had better have been left independent, and that wars have been undertaken which were as needless as they were altogether unjustifiable. The immense empire that has been conquered is too vast for management, its base is in decay, and during the last twelve months it has appeared to be tottering to its fall. Who or what is the instrument—the Cabinet, the

Government, or the person—by whom this evil policy is carried on?

The greatest officer in India is the Governor-General. He is the ruler of about one-fifth—certainly more than one-sixth—of the human race. The Emperors of France and Russia are but the governors of provinces compared with the power, the dignity, and the high estate of the Governor-General of India. Now, over this officer, almost no real control is exercised. If I were to appeal to the two hon. Gentlemen who have frequently addressed the House during these debates (Colonel Sykes and Mr. Willoughby), they would probably admit that the Governor-General of India is an officer of such high position that scarcely any control can be exercised over him either in India or in England. Take the case of the Marquess of Dalhousie for example. I am not about to make an attack upon him, for the occasion is too solemn for personal controversies. But the annexation of Sattara, of the Punjab, of Nagpore, and of Oude occurred under his rule. I will not go into the case of Sattara; but one of its Princes, and one of the most magnanimous Princes that India ever produced, suffered and died most unjustly in exile, either through the mistakes or the crimes of the Government of India. This, however, was not done under the Government of Lord Dalhousie. As to the annexation of Nagpore, the House has never heard anything about it to this hour. There has been no message from the Crown or statement of the Government relative to that annexation. Hon. Members have indeed heard from India that the dresses and wardrobes of the ladies of its Court have been exposed to sale, like a bankrupt's stock, in the haberdashers' shops of Calcutta—a thing likely to incense and horrify the people of India who witnessed it.

Take, again, the case of the Burmese war. The Governor-General entered into it, and annexed the province of Pegu, and to this day there has been no treaty with the King of Burmah. If that case had been brought before the House, it is impossible that the war with Burmah could have been entered upon. I do not believe that there is one man in England who, knowing the facts, would say that this war was just or necessary in any sense. The Governor-General has an army of 300,000 men under his command; he is a long way from home; he is highly connected with the governing classes at home; there are certain reasons that make war palatable to large classes in India; and he is so powerful that he enters into these great military operations almost uncontrolled by the opinion of the Parliament and people of England. He may commit any amount of blunders or crimes against the moral law, and he will still come home loaded with dignities and in the enjoyment of pensions. Does it not become the power and character of this House to examine narrowly the origin of the misfortunes and disgraces of the grave catastrophe which has just occurred? The place of the Governor-General is too high—his power is too great—and I believe that this particular office and officer are very much responsible—of course under the Government at home—for the disasters that have taken place.

Only think of a Governor-General of India writing to an Indian Prince, the ruler over many millions of men in the heart of India, 'Remember you are but as the dust under my feet.' Passages like these are left out of despatches, when laid on the table of the House of Commons:—it would not do for the Parliament or the Crown, or the people of England to know that their officer addressed language like this to a Native Prince. The fact is that a Governor-General of India, unless he be such a man as is not found more than once in a century, is very liable to have his head turned, and to form ambitious views, which are mainly to be gratified by successful wars and the annexation of province after province during the period of his rule. The 'Services' are always ready to help him in these plans.

am not sure that the President of the oard of Control could not give evidence n this subject, for I have heard someing of what happened when the noble ord was in India. When the Burmese ar broke out, the noble Lord could no oubt tell the House that, without inuiring into the quarrel or its causes, ie press of India, which was devoted the 'Services,' and the 'Services' emselves, united in universal approition of the course taken by the overnor-General. Justice to Pegu and urmah and the taxes to be raised for e support of the war were forgotten, d nothing but visions of more terriry and more patronage floated before e eyes of the official English in India. contend that the power of the Gover-or-General is too great and the office o high to be held by the subject of y power whatsoever, and especially by y subject of the Queen of England.

I should propose, if I were in a posion to offer a scheme in the shape of a ll to the House, as an indispensable eliminary to the wise government of dia in future, such as would be creditle to Parliament and advantageous to e people of India, that the office of overnor-General should be abolished. rhaps some hon. Gentlemen may think is a very unreasonable proposition. any people thought it unreasonable in 53 when it was proposed to abolish e East India Company; but now rliament and the country believe it be highly reasonable and proper; d I am not sure that I could not ing before the House reasons to conice them that the abolition of the ice of Governor-General is one of e most sensible and one of the most nservative proposals ever brought ward in connection with the Governnt of India. I believe the duties of e Governor-General are far greater an any human being can adequately fil. He has a power omnipotent to ish anything that is good. If he so shes, he can overbear and overrule ever is proposed for the welfare of , while, as to doing anything that is good, I could show that with regard to the vast countries over which he rules, he is really almost powerless to effect anything that those countries require. The hon. Gentleman behind me (Colonel Sykes) has told us there are twenty nations in India, and that there are twenty languages. Has it ever happened before that any one man governed twenty nations, speaking twenty different languages, and bound them together in one great and compact empire? [An hon. Member here made an observation.] My hon. Friend mentions a great Parthian monarch. No doubt there have been men strong in arm and in head, and of stern resolution, who have kept great empires together during their lives; but as soon as they went the way of all flesh, and descended, like the meanest of their subjects, to the tomb, the provinces they had ruled were divided into several States, and their great empires vanished. I might ask the noble Lord below me (Lord John Russell) and the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn has not as yet experience on this point), whether, when they came to appoint a Governor-General of India, they did not find it one of the most serious and difficult duties they could be called on to perform? I do not know at this moment, and I never have known, a man competent to govern India; and if any man says he is competent, he sets himself up at a much higher value than those who are acquainted with him are likely to set him. Let the House look at the making of the laws for twenty nations speaking twenty languages. Look at the regulations of the police for twenty nations speaking twenty languages. Look at the question of public works as it affects twenty nations speaking twenty languages; where there is no municipal power and no combinations of any kind, such as facilitate the construction of public works in this country. Inevitably all those duties that devolve on every good government must be neglected by the Governor-General of

India, however wise, capable, and honest he may be in the performance of his duties, because the duties laid upon him are such as no man now living or who ever lived can or could properly sustain.

It may be asked what I would substitute for the Governor-Generalship of India. Now, I do not propose to abolish the office of Governor-General of India this Session. I am not proposing any clause in the Bill, and if I were to propose one to carry out the idea I have expressed, I might be answered by the argument, that a great part of the population of India is in a state of anarchy, and that it would be most inconvenient, if not dangerous, to abolish the office of Governor-General at such a time. I do not mean to propose such a thing now; but I take this opportunity of stating my views, in the hope that when we come to 1863, we may perhaps be able to consider the question more in the light in which I am endeavouring to present it to the House. I would propose that, instead of having a Governor-General and an Indian empire, we should have neither the one nor the other. I would propose that we should have Presidencies, and not an Empire. If I were a Minister—which the House will admit is a bold figure of speech—and if the House were to agree with me—which is also an essential point—I would propose to have at least five Presidencies in India, and I would have the governments of those Presidencies perfectly equal in rank and in salary. The capitals of those Presidencies would probably be Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Agra, and Lahore. I will take the Presidency of Madras as an illustration. Madras has a population of some 20,000,000. We all know its position on the map, and that it has the advantage of being more compact, geographically speaking, than the other Presidencies. It has a Governor and a Council. I would give to it a Governor and a Council still, but would confine all their duties to the Presidency of Madras, and I would treat it just as if Madras was the only portion of India connected this country. I would have its fin its taxation, its justice, and its p departments, as well as its public w and military departments, precisely same as if it were a State having connection with any other part of I and recognized only as a dependenc this country. I would propose that Government of every Presidency sh correspond with the Secretary for I in England, and that there should telegraphic communications betwee the Presidencies in India, as I hope fore long to see a telegraphic comm cation between the office of the n Lord (Lord Stanley) and every P dency over which he presides. I s no doubt be told that there are insu able difficulties in the way of such arrangement, and I shall be sure to of the military difficulty. Now, I not profess to be an authority on tary affairs, but I know that mili men often make great mistakes would have the army divided, Presidency having its own army, as now, care being taken to have t kept distinct; and I see no dange any confusion or misunderstanding, w an emergency arose, in having then brought together to carry out the v of the Government. There is one q tion which it is important to bea mind, and that is with regard to Councils in India. I think every vernor of a Presidency should hav assistant Council, but differently stituted from what they now are would have an open Council noble Lord the Member for Lo used some expressions the other n which I interpreted to mean that it necessary to maintain in all its exclu ness the system of the Civil Servic India. In that I entirely differ the noble Lord. [Lord J. Russell indicated dissent.] The noble l corrects me in that statement, and th fore I must have been mistaken. W we want is to make the Governm of the Presidencies governments fo people of the Presidencies; not

s for the civil servants of the Crown, or the non-official mercantile classes England who settle there, and for o.000,000 or 30,000,000 of Natives ch Presidency.

should propose to do that which een done with great advantage in on. I have received a letter from fficer who has been in the service e East India Company, and who me a fact which has gratified me much. He says—

t a public dinner at Colombo, in 1835, e Governor, Sir Wilmot Horton, at I was present, the best speech of the ng was made by a native nobleman ndy, and a member of Council. It emarkable for its appropriate expres- its sound sense, and the deliberation ase that marked the utterance of his gs. There was no repetition or use- phraseology or flattery, and it was ted by all who heard him to be the lest and neatest speech of the night.'

was in Ceylon. It is not, of course, ys the best man who can make the speech; but if what I have read l be said of a native of Ceylon, it l be said of thousands in India. need not go beyond the walls of House to find a head bronzed by dian sun equal to the ablest heads ose who adorn its benches. And ery part of India we all know that uld be an insult to the people of . to say that it is not the same. e are thousands of persons in India are competent to take any position hich the Government may choose lvance them. If the Governor of Presidency were to have in his cil some of the officials of his rnment, some of the non-official peans resident in the Presidency, wo or three at least of the intelli- Natives of the Presidency in whom eople would have some confidence, vould have begun that which will inestimable value hereafter—you d have begun to unite the govern- with the governed; and unless o that, no government will be safe, and any hurricane may overturn it or throw it into confusion.

Now, suppose the Governor-General gone, the Presidencies established, the Governors equal in rank and dignity, and their Councils constituted in the manner I have indicated, is it not reasonable to suppose that the delay which has hitherto been one of the greatest curses of your Indian Government would be almost altogether avoided? Instead of a Governor-General living in Calcutta, or at Simla, never travelling over the whole of the country, and knowing very little about it, and that little only through other official eyes, is it not reasonable to suppose that the action of the Government would be more direct in all its duties and in every department of its service than has been the case under the system which has existed until now? Your administration of the law, marked by so much disgrace, could never have lasted so long as it has done if the Governors of your Presidencies had been independent Governors. So with regard to matters of police, education, public works, and everything that can stimulate industry, and so with regard to your system of taxation. You would have in every Presidency a constant rivalry for good. The Governor of Madras, when his term of office expired, would be delighted to show that the people of that Presidency were contented, that the whole Presidency was advancing in civilization, that roads and all manner of useful public works were extending, that industry was becoming more and more a habit of the people, and that the exports and imports were constantly increasing. The Governors of Bombay and the rest of the Presidencies would be animated by the same spirit, and so you would have all over India, as I have said, a rivalry for good; you would have placed a check on that malignant spirit of ambition which has worked so much evil—you would have no Governor so great that you could not control him, none who might make war when he pleased;

war and annexation would be greatly checked, if not entirely prevented; and I do in my conscience believe you would have laid the foundation for a better and more permanent form of government for India than has ever obtained since it came under the rule of England.

But how long does England propose to govern India? Nobody answers that question, and nobody can answer it. Be it 50, or 100, or 500 years, does any man with the smallest glimmering of common sense believe that so great a country, with its twenty different nations and its twenty languages, can ever be bound up and consolidated into one compact and enduring empire? I believe such a thing to be utterly impossible. We must fail in the attempt if ever we make it, and we are bound to look into the future with reference to that point. The Presidency of Madras, for instance, having its own Government, would in fifty years become one compact State, and every part of the Presidency would look to the city of Madras as its capital, and to the Government of Madras as its ruling power. If that were to go on for a century or more, there would be five or six Presidencies of India built up into so many compact States; and if at any future period the sovereignty of England should be withdrawn, we should leave so many Presidencies built up and firmly compacted together, each able to support its own independence and its own Government; and we should be able to say we had not left the country a prey to that anarchy and discord which I believe to be inevitable if we insist on holding those vast territories with the idea of building them up into one great empire. But I am obliged to admit that mere machinery is not sufficient in this case, either with respect to my own scheme or to that of the noble lord (Lord Stanley). We want something else than mere clerks, stationery, despatches, and so forth. We want what I shall designate as a new feeling in England, and an entirely new policy in India. We must in future have India governed, not for a handful of Englishmen, not for that Civil Service whose praises are so constantly sounded in this House. You may govern India, if you like, for the good of England, but the good of England must come through the channels of the good of India. There are but two modes of gaining anything by our connection with India. The one is by plundering the people of India, and the other by trading with them. I prefer to do it by trading with them. But in order that England may become rich by trading with India, India itself must become rich, and India can only become rich through the honest administration of justice and through entire security of life and property.

Now, as to this new policy, I will tell the House what I think the Prime Minister should do. He ought, I think, always to choose for his President of the Board of Control or his Secretary of State for India, a man who cannot be excelled by any other man in his Cabinet, or in his party, for capacity, for honesty, for attention to his duties, and for knowledge adapted to the particular office to which he is appointed. If any Prime Minister appoint an inefficient man to such an office, he will be a traitor to the Throne of England. That officer, appointed for the qualities I have just indicated, should, with equal scrupulousness and conscientiousness, make the appointments, whether of the Governor-General, or (should that office be abolished) of the Governors of the Presidencies of India. Those appointments should not be rewards for old men simply because such men have done good service when in their prime, nor should they be rewards for mere party service, but they should be appointments given under a feeling that interests of the very highest moment, connected with this country, depend on those great offices in India being properly filled. The same principles should run throughout the whole system of government; for, unless there be every

high degree of virtue in all these appointments, and unless our great object be to govern India well and to exalt the name of England in the eyes of the whole Native population, all that we have recourse to in the way of machinery will be of very little use indeed.

I admit that this is a great work; I admit, also, that the further I go into the consideration of this question, the more I feel that it is too large for me to grapple with, and that every step we take in it should be taken as if we were men walking in the dark. We have, however, certain great principles to guide us, and by their light we may make steps in advance, if not fast, at any rate sure. But we start from an unfortunate position. We start from a platform of conquest by force of arms extending over a hundred years. There is nothing in the world worse than the sort of foundation from which we start. The greatest genius who has shed lustre on the literature of this country has said, 'There is no sure foundation set on blood;' and it may be our unhappy fate, in regard to India, to demonstrate the truth of that saying. We are always subjugators, and we must be viewed with hatred and suspicion. I say we must look at the thing as it is, if we are to see our exact position, what our duty is, and what chance there is of our retaining India and of governing it for the advantage of its people. Our difficulties have been enormously increased by the revolt. The people of India have only seen England in its worst form in that country. They have seen it in its military power, its exclusive Civil Service, and in the supremacy of a handful of foreigners. When Natives of India come to this country, they are delighted with England and with Englishmen. They find themselves treated with a kindness, a consideration, a respect, to which they were wholly strangers in their own country; and they cannot understand how it is that men who are so just, so attentive to them here, sometimes, indeed too often, appear to them in a different character in India. I remember that the Hon. Frederic Shore, who wrote some thirty years since, stated, in his able and instructive book, that even in his time the conduct of the English in India towards the Natives was less agreeable, less kindly, less just than it had been in former years; and in 1853, before the Committee presided over by the hon. Member for Huntingdon (Mr. T. Baring), evidence was given that the feeling between the rulers and the ruled in India was becoming every year less like what could be desired. It was only the other day there appeared in a letter of *The Times*' correspondent an anecdote which illustrates what I am saying, and which I feel it necessary to read to the House. Mr. Russell, of *The Times*, says:—

'I went off to breakfast in a small mosque, which has been turned into a *salle à manger* by some officers stationed here, and I confess I should have eaten with more satisfaction had I not seen, as I entered the enclosure of the mosque, a native badly wounded on a charpoy, by which was sitting a woman in deep affliction. The explanation given of this scene was, that "—— [the name of the Englishman was left blank] had been licking two of his bearers (or servants), and had nearly murdered them." This was one of the servants, and, without knowing or caring to know the causes of such chastisement, I cannot but express my disgust at the severity—to call it by no harsher name—of some of our fellow-countrymen towards their domestics.'

The reading of that paragraph gave me extreme pain. People may fancy that this does not matter much; but I say it matters very much. Under any system of government you will have Englishmen scattered all over India, and conduct like that I have just described, in any district, must create ill feeling towards England, to your rule, to your supremacy; and when that feeling has become sufficiently extensive, any little accident may give fire to the train, and you may have calamities

more or less serious, such as we have had during the last twelve months. You must change all this if you mean to keep India. I do not now make any comment upon the mode in which this country has been put into possession of India. I accept that possession as a fact. There we are; we do not know how to leave it, and therefore let us see if we know how to govern it. It is a problem such as, perhaps, no other nation has had to solve. Let us see whether there is enough of intelligence and virtue in England to solve the difficulty. In the first place, then, I say, let us abandon all that system of calumny against the Natives of India which has lately prevailed. Had that people not been docile, the most governable race in the world, how could you have maintained your power for 100 years? Are they not industrious, are they not intelligent, are they not—upon the evidence of the most distinguished men the Indian Service ever produced—endowed with many qualities which make them respected by all Englishmen who mix with them? I have heard that from many men of the widest experience, and have read the same in the works of some of the best writers upon India. Then let us not have these constant calumnies against such a people. Even now there are men who go about the country speaking as if such things had never been contradicted, and talking of mutilations and atrocities committed in India. The less we say about atrocities the better. Great political tumults are, I fear, never brought about or subdued without grievous acts on both sides deeply to be regretted. At least, we are in the position of invaders and conquerors—they are in the position of the invaded and the conquered. Whether I were a native of India, or of England, or of any other country, I would not the less assert the great distinction between their position and ours in that country, and I would not permit any man in my presence, without rebuke, to indulge in the calumnies and expressions of contempt which I have recently heard poured forth without measure upon the whole population of India.

There is one other point to which I wish to address myself before I sit down, and in touching upon it I address myself especially to the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and his colleagues in the Government. If I had the responsibility of administering the affairs of India, there are certain things I would do. I would, immediately after this Bill passes, issue a Proclamation in India which should reach every subject of the British Crown in that country, and be heard of in the territories of every Indian Prince or Rajah. I would offer a general amnesty. It is all very well to talk of issuing an amnesty to all who have done nothing; but who is there that has done nothing in such a state of affairs as has prevailed during the past twelve months? If you pursue your vengeance until you have rooted out and destroyed every one of those soldiers who have revolted, when will your labour cease? If you are to punish every non-military Native of India who has given a piece of bread or a cup of water to a revolted trooper, how many Natives will escape your punishment and your vengeance? I would have a general amnesty, which should be put forth as the first great act done directly by the Queen of England in the exercise of Sovereign power over the territories of India. In this Proclamation I would promise to the Natives of India a security for their property as complete as we have here at home; and I would put an end to all those mischievous and irritating inquiries which have been going on for years in many parts of India as to the title to landed estates, by which you tell the people of that country that unless each man can show an unimpeachable title to his property for ninety years you will dispossess him. What would be the state of things here if such a regulation were adopted?

I would also proclaim to the people of India that we would hold sacred that

right of adoption which has prevailed for centuries in that country. It was only the other day that I had laid before me the case of a Native Prince who has been most faithful to England during these latter trials. When he came to the throne at ten years of age he was made to sign a document, by which he agreed that if he had no children his territories should be at the disposal of the British Government, or what was called the paramount power. He has been married; he has had one son and two or three daughters; but within the last few weeks his only son has died. There is grief in the palace, and there is consternation among the people, for the fact of this agreement entered into by the boy of ten years old is well known to all the inhabitants of the country. Representations have already been made to this country in the hope that the Government will cancel that agreement, and allow the people of that State to know that the right of adoption would not be taken from their Prince in case he should have no other son. Let the Government do that, and there is not a corner of India into which that intelligence would not penetrate with the rapidity of lightning. And would not that calm the anxieties of many of those independent Princes and Rajahs who are only afraid that when these troubles are over, the English Government will recommence that system of annexation out of which I believe all these troubles have arisen?

I would tell them also in that Proclamation, that while the people of England hold that their own, the Christian religion, is true and the best for mankind, yet that it is consistent with that religion that they who profess it should hold inviolable the rights of conscience and the rights of religion in others. I would show, that whatever violent, overzealous, and fanatical men may have said in this country, the Parliament of England, the Ministers of the Queen, and the Queen herself, are resolved that upon this point no kind of wrong should be done to the millions who profess the religions held to be true in India. I would do another thing. I would establish a Court of Appeal, the Judges of which should be Judges of the highest character in India, for the settlement of those many disputes which have arisen between the Government of India and its subjects, some Native and some European. I would not suffer these questions to come upon the floor of this House. I would not forbid them by statute, but I would establish a Court which should render it unnecessary for any man in India to cross the ocean to seek for that justice which he would then be able to get in his own country without corruption or secret bargain. Then I would carry out the proposition which the noble Lord has made tonight, and which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer made when he introduced his Bill, that a Commission should be issued to inquire into the question of finance. I would have other commissions, one for each Presidency, and I would tell the people of India that there should be a searching inquiry into their grievances, and that it was the interest and the will of the Queen of England that those grievances should be redressed.

Now, perhaps I may be told that I am proposing strange things, quite out of the ordinary routine of government. I admit it. We are in a position that necessitates something out of the ordinary routine. There are positions and times in the history of every country, as in the lives of individuals, when courage and action are absolute salvation; and now the Crown of England, acting by the advice of the responsible Ministers, must, in my opinion, have recourse to a great and unusual measure in order to allay the anxieties which prevail throughout the whole of India. The people of India do not like us, but they scarcely know where to turn if we left them. They are sheep literally without a shepherd. They are people whom you have subdued, and who have the highest and strongest claims upon you —claims which you cannot forget—

INDIA.

III.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 20, 1858.

From Hansard.

[A despatch of Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, to Lord Canning, the Governor-General of India, had been laid before the two Houses. This document severely censured the Governor-General's policy in dealing with the talookdars of Oude. Immediate advantage was taken of this document by the Opposition, and on the 10th of May Mr. Cardwell gave notice in the Commons of a motion condemnatory of Lord Ellenborough's despatch. Lord Ellenborough retired from the Government. On May 14, however, Mr. Cardwell brought forward his motion in the House of Commons, but, after a lengthened debate, consented to withdraw it, at the earnest entreaty of many from his own side of the House.]

I AM afraid I shall hardly be able to take part in this discussion in a manner becoming the magnitude of the question before us, and in any degree in accordance with the long anxiety which I have felt in regard to Indian affairs, but I happen to have been unfortunately and accidentally a good deal mixed up with these matters, and my name has frequently been mentioned in the course of debate, not only in this but in the other House of Parliament, and I am unwilling, therefore, to vote without expressing my opinion upon the matter under discussion. First, I may be allowed to explain that I think almost everything that has been said and imagined with regard to the part that I have had in bringing on this discussion has been altogether erroneous, and has no foundation whatever. There was no arrangement between the hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control and myself with regard to the question that I thought it my duty to put to him on the subject of Lord Canning's Proclamation. I had spoken two or three weeks before the date of that question to the hon. Gentleman, because I had been informed by a respected friend of mine, Mr. Dickinson, the hon. secretary of the India Reform Society, who has very great information on Indian affairs, that he had received communications to the effect that some Proclamation of this character was in preparation and was about to be issued. I spoke to the hon. Member with regard to that report; and he told me that he had received no communication which enabled him to give me any information on the subject. I then intimated to him that in case there was anything of the kind I should certainly put a question to the Government respecting it. This was three weeks before the date of my question. Well, I read the Proclamation in *The Times* newspaper, the same day that every one else read it; and I came down to the House and

claims which, if you do not act upon, you may rely upon it that, if there be a judgment for nations—as I believe there is—as for individuals, our children in no distant generation must pay the penalty which we have purchased by neglecting our duty to the populations of India.

I have now stated my views and opinions on this question, not at all in a manner, I feel, equal to the question itself. I have felt the difficulty in thinking of it; I feel the difficulty in speaking of it—for there is far more in it and about it than any man, however much he may be accustomed to think upon political questions, and to discuss them, can comprise at all within the compass of a speech of ordinary length. I have described the measures which I would at once adopt for the purpose of soothing the agitation which now disturbs and menaces every part of India, and of inviting the submission of those who are now in arms against you. Now I believe—I speak in the most perfect honesty—I believe that the announcement of these measures would avail more in restoring tranquillity than the presence of an additional army, and I believe that their full and honest adoption would enable you to retain your power in India. I have sketched the form of government which I would establish in India and at home, with the view of securing perfect responsibility and an enlightened administration. I admit that these things can only be obtained in degree, but I am convinced that a Government such as that which I have sketched would be free from most of the errors and the vices that have marked and marred your past career in India. I have given much study to this great and solemn question. I entreat the House to study it not only now, during the passing of this Bill, but after the Session is over, and till we meet again next year, when in all probability there must be further legislation upon this great subject; for I believe that upon this question depends very much, for good or for evil, the future of this country of which we are citizens, and which we all regard and love so much. You have had enough of military reputation on Eastern fields; you have gathered large harvests of that commodity, be it valuable or be it worthless. I invite you to something better, and higher, and holier than that; I invite you to a glory not 'fanned by conquest's crimson wing,' but based upon the solid and lasting benefits which I believe the Parliament of England can, if it will, confer upon the countless populations of India.

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having seen the hon. Gentleman in the meantime. I met my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. J. B. Smith) in Westminster Hall, and he told me that having read the despatch, and knowing my intention with regard to it, he, having met the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Baillie) that evening, said to him he had no doubt that when I came down to the House I should put a question respecting it. When I came down I put a question and received an answer; both question and answer are before the House and the country. But I confess I did not anticipate that we should lose a week from the discussion of the Indian Resolutions on account of the question which I then asked the hon Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Control.

Now, Sir, with respect to the question before the House, I should have been content to let it end when the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor-General sat down. I think, Sir, the House might have come to a vote when the Solicitor-General finished his speech. I could not but compare that speech with the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution now before the House. I thought the right hon. Gentleman raked together a great many small things to make up a great case. It appeared to me that he spoke as if his manner indicated that he was not perfectly satisfied with the course he was pursuing. I think he failed to stimulate himself with the idea that he was performing a great public duty; for if he had been impressed with that idea I think his subject would have enabled him to deliver a more lively and impressive speech than that which he has made. But, Sir, I believe that every one will admit that the speech of the Solicitor-General was characterised by the closest logic and the most complete and exhaustive argument. There is scarcely a Gentleman with whom I have spoken with regard to that speech who does not admit that the hon. and learned Gentleman has seemed to have taken up the whole question, and to have given a complete answer to all serious charges brought against the Government.

This Motion is an important one in two aspects. First of all as respects the interests of parties at home—which some people, probably, think the more important of the interests concerned; and, secondly, as respects the effect which will be produced in India when this discussion, with the vote at which we arrive, reaches that country and is read there. The princes, the rajahs, and intelligent landholders, whether under the English Government or independent, will know very little about what we understand by party; and any cabal or political conspiracy here will have no influence on them. They know little of the persons who conduct and take a part in the debate in this House; and the 'loud cheers' which they will read of in our discussions will be almost nothing to them. The question to them will be, What is the opinion of the Parliament of England as to the policy announced to India in the Proclamation?

Now, Sir, I complain of the right hon. Gentleman, and I think the House has reason to complain, that in his Resolution he endeavours to evade the real point of discussion. The noble Lord who has just sat down (Viscount Goderich) says he will not meet this matter in any such indirect manner as that proposed by the Amendment of the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn); but what can be less direct than the issue offered by the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford? This is proved by the fact that, throughout the course of this discussion, every serious argument and every serious expression has had reference to the character of the Proclamation, and not to those little matters which are mixed up in this Resolution. Nobody, I believe, defends the Proclamation in the light in which it is viewed by the Government, and censured by the Government. All that has been done is an endeavour to show that it is not rightly understood by those who censure it as announcing a policy of

confiscation. In fact, in endeavouring to defend it, hon. Members insist that it does not mean something which it says it does mean, and which if any of us understand the English language it assuredly does mean. The right hon. Gentleman asks us to do that which I think is an absolute impossibility. He wants us to condemn the censure, and wishes at the same time—and I give him credit for this—that we should pronounce no approval of the thing censured. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman, though unfortunately he has been led into this movement, wishes the House to pronounce an opinion in favour of confiscation. I do not believe that any Member of this House asks us to come to a conclusion in such a way as that our decision shall be an approval of that which the Government has condemned in the despatch. But if we affirm the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman, how is it possible for the people of India to understand our decision in any other sense than as an approval of the policy of Lord Canning's Proclamation? With regard to the publication of the Government despatch, it is not a little remarkable how men turn round and object to what they formerly were so loud in demanding. On this side of the House it has been the commonest thing to hear hon. Gentlemen say that all this secrecy on the part of the Foreign Office and the Board of Control is a cause of the greatest mischief. Assume for a moment that the publication of this despatch was injudicious—after all, it was no high crime and misdemeanour. We on this side of the House, and hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, ought to look with kindness on this failing, which, if a failing, leans to virtue's side. Then, Sir, with regard to the language of the despatch, I do not know of any Government or Minister who would not be open to censure if we chose to take up every word in a despatch. A man of firmer texture, of stronger impulse, and more indignant feelings will, on certain occasions, write in stronger terms than other men—and I confess I like those men best who write and speak so that you can really understand them. Now I say that the proposition before the House is a disingenuous one. It attempts to lead the House into a very unfortunate dilemma. I think that no judicial mind—seeing that the result of a decision in favour of this Resolution will be the establishment of the policy of the Proclamation—will fail to be convinced that we ought not to arrive at such a decision without great hesitation, and that we cannot do so without producing a very injurious effect on the minds of the people of India.

We now come to what all parties admit to be the real question—the Proclamation and the policy of confiscation announced in it. There are certain matters which I understand all sides of the House to be agreed on. They agree with the Government and the East India Company that the people of Oude are enemies but that they are not rebels. [Cries of 'Yes, yes!'—'No, no!'] I thought the supporters of the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford told us that if the Government had written a judicious despatch like that of the East India Company, they would have applauded and not censured it. Well, the East India Directors—and they are likely to know, for they were connected with the commission of the Act that brought this disturbance in Oude upon us—say that the people of Oude are not rebels; that they are not to be treated as rebels, but as enemies. If so, the Government have a right to treat them according to those rules which are observed by nations which are at war with each other. Will the House accept that proposition? ['No, no!'—'Yes, yes!'] Well, if hon. Gentlemen on this side will not accept it, I hope the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Viscount Goderich) will not include them amongst those who are in favour of clemency. I am quite sure the people of England will accept that definition—that civilised Europe will accept it; and that history—history

which will record our proceedings this night, and our vote on this Resolution—will accept it. Sir, I do not see how any one claiming to be an Englishman or a Christian can by any possibility escape from condemning the policy of this Proclamation.

I now come—and on that point I will be as brief as possible—to the question. What is the meaning of confiscating the proprietary rights in the soil? We have heard from a noble Lord in 'another place,' and it has been stated in the course of the debate here, that this sentence of confiscation refers only to certain unpleasant persons who are called talookdars, who are barons and robber chiefs and oppressors of the people. This is by no means the first time that, after a great wrong has been committed, the wrong-doer has attempted to injure by calumny those upon whom the wrong has been inflicted. Lord Shaftesbury, who is a sort of leader in this great war, has told the world that this Proclamation refers only to 600 persons in the kingdom of Oude.

The kingdom of Oude has about five millions of people, or one-sixth of the population of the United Kingdom. Applied to the United Kingdom in the same rate of the population it would apply to 3,600 persons. Now, in both Houses of Parliament there are probably 700 landed proprietors. It would, therefore, be an edict of confiscation to the landed proprietors of the United Kingdom equal to five times all the landed proprietors in both Houses of Parliament. An hon. Gentleman says I am all wrong in my figures. I shall be glad to hear his figures afterwards. But that is not the fact; but if it were the fact, it would amount not to a political, but to an entire social revolution in this country. And surely, when you live in a country where you have, as in Scotland, a great province under one Member of the House of Lords, and seventy or eighty miles of territory under another, and where you have Dukes of Bedford and Dukes of Devonshire, as in England—surely, I say, we ought to be a little careful, at any rate, that we do not overturn, without just cause, the proprietary rights of the great talookdars and landowners in India. It is a known fact, which anybody may ascertain by referring to books which have been written, and to witnesses who cannot be mistaken, that this edict would apply to more than 40,000 landowners in the kingdom of Oude. And what is it that is meant by these proprietary rights? We must see what is the general course of the policy of our government in India. If you sweep away all proprietary rights in the kingdom of Oude you will have this result—that there will be nobody connected with the land but the Government of India and the humble cultivator who tills the soil. And you will have this further result, that the whole produce of the land of Oude and of the industry of its people will be divided into two most unequal portions; the larger share will go to the Government in the shape of tax, and the smaller share, which will be a handful of rice per day, will go to the cultivator of the soil. Now, this is the Indian system. It is the grand theory of the civilians, under whose advice, I very much fear, Lord Canning has unfortunately acted; and you will find in many parts of India, especially in the Presidency of Madras, that the population consists entirely of the class of cultivators, and that the Government stands over them with a screw which is perpetually turned, leaving the handful of rice per day to the ryot or the cultivator, and pouring all the rest of the produce of the soil into the Exchequer of the East India Company. Now, I believe that this Proclamation sanctions this policy; and I believe further that the Resolution which the right hon. Gentleman asks the House to adopt, sanctions this Proclamation; that it will be so read in India, and that whatever may be the influence, unfortunate as I believe it will be, of the Proclamation itself, when it is known throughout India that this—the highest court of

appeal—has pronounced in favour of Lord Canning's policy, it will be one of the most unfortunate declarations that ever went forth from the Parliament of this country to the people of that empire.

Let me then for one minute—and it shall be but for one minute—ask the attention of the House to our pecuniary dealings with Oude. A friend of mine has extracted from a book on this subject two or three facts which I should like to state to the House, as we are now considering the policy of England towards that afflicted country. It is stated that, under the government of Warren Hastings, to the arrival of Lord Cornwallis in 1786, the East India Company obtained from the kingdom of Oude, and therefore from the Exchequer of the people of Oude, the sum of 9,252,000*l.*; under Lord Cornwallis, 4,290,000*l.*; under Lord Teignmouth, 1,280,000*l.*; under Lord Wellesley, 10,358,000*l.* This includes, I ought to observe, the Doab, taken in 1801 in lieu of subsidy, the annual revenue of that district being 1,352,000*l.* Coming down to the year 1814, there was a loan of a million; in 1815 a loan of a million; in 1825 a loan of a million; in 1826 a loan of a million; in 1829 a loan of 625,000*l.*; and in 1838 a loan of 1,700,000*l.* Some of these sums, the House will observe, are loans, and in one case the loan was repaid by a portion of territory which the Company, in a very few years, under an excuse which I should not like to justify, re-annexed to themselves, and therefore the debt was virtually never repaid. The whole of these sums comes to 31,500,000*l.*; in addition to which Oude has paid vast sums in salaries, pensions, and emoluments of every kind to servants of the Company engaged in the service of the Government of Oude.

I am not going further into detail with regard to that matter; but I say that the history of our connection with the country, whose interests we are now discussing, is of a nature that ought to make us pause before we consent to any measure that shall fill up the cup of injury which we have offered to the lips of that people. After this, two years ago, we deposed the Sovereign of Oude. Everything that he had was seized—much of it was sold. Indignities were offered to his family. Their ruin was accomplished, though they were the governors of that kingdom. Some hon. Gentleman, speaking on this side of the House, has tried to persuade the House that this confiscation policy only intends that we should receive the taxes of Oude. But that is altogether a delusion. That is a statement so absurd that I am astonished that any one, even of those that support the Resolution, should offer it to the House. In 1856, when you dethroned the King of Oude, you stepped into his place, and became the recipients of all the legitimate national taxes of the kingdom of Oude; and now, having seized the 500,000*l.* a-year, the revenue of that country, after a solemn treaty which contained a clause that if there were a surplus of revenue it should be paid to the credit of the kingdom of Oude; after having applied that surplus, contrary to the clause of that treaty, to the general purposes of India; you now step in and you descend below the King, to every talookdar, to every landowner, large or small, to every man who has proprietary rights in the soil, to every man, the smallest and humblest capitalist who cultivates the soil—to every one of these you say in language that cannot be mistaken—'Come down from the independence and dignity you have held. As we have done in other provinces of India we shall do here. Two-thirds of you have not been mixed up in this war; but in this general confiscation the innocent must suffer with the guilty, for such is the misfortune of war, and such is the penalty which we shall inflict upon you.' Sir, if this Proclamation be not a Proclamation of unheard-of severity, how comes it that so many persons have protested against it? Does any man believe that the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Viscount Goderich)

understands this Proclamation better than the high military authorities who have so long known India? Does he suppose that the House of Commons will take his authority upon a matter of this kind in preference to the authority of the whole united press of India? ['Oh! oh!'] Well, I dare say that hon. Members who cry 'Oh!' have not read the newspapers of India upon the subject. Some of them uphold it because they say that at one fell swoop it has done that which it took us twenty years to do in other districts of India, and destroys every man who could influence the people against the British Government. Others say that it is a Proclamation of such a character that it must cause 'war to the knife' against the English, and that the Governor-General who issued such a Proclamation should have been prepared with a new army at his back that he might have power to enforce it.

The learned Gentleman the Attorney-General for Ireland referred in his speech the other night to what had been said by the hon. and learned Member for Devonport (Sir E. Perry) on the occasion of a question that I had put some two or three weeks ago. Now I call the House to witness whether when I put the question which brought out this despatch, and when the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose in his place and gave the answer that with respect to the policy of confiscation—for that is the only thing there is any dispute about in the Proclamation — the Government disavowed it in every sense—I call the House to witness whether every Gentleman present in this part of the House did not cheer that sentiment. Of course, every man cheered it. They would not have been men; they would not have been Englishmen; they would not have been legislators; they would have been men who had never heard of what was just and right, if every instinct within them, at the instant they heard the declaration of the Government, did not compel them to an enthusiastic assent. And it was only when the fatal influence of party, and the arts which party knows how to employ, were put in motion, that hon. Gentlemen began to discover that there was something serious and something dangerous in this memorable despatch. Now, I would ask the House this question—are we prepared to sanction the policy of that despatch?

I am very sorry that I have not done what only occurred to me after this debate commenced, and after the Amendment was proposed, or I should have proposed another Amendment to the House that went expressly upon that point, because—and I speak it without the smallest reference to the influence which it may have on any party in this House—I think it of the very highest consequence that, whatever decision we come to, it should be liable to no misinterpretation when it arrives in India. Then, Sir, we have been treated to a good deal of eloquence upon the manner of the despatch; and with regard to that I must say a word or two. The noble Lord the Member for London, who sits below me, has, I think, fallen into the error of most of the speakers in favour of the Resolution; that is, of treating some of the outside circumstances of the case as if they were the case itself. I do not think, however, that he stated there was a word in the despatch which was not true, although he did express what I thought was rather an immoral sentiment for so eminent a statesman. The noble Lord told us that after a crime had been committed, men in office were never to let it be known or suspected that they thought it was a crime. [Lord John Russell: 'The hon. Gentleman is mistaken; I never said anything of the kind.'] I did not hear it myself, but I read it, and many of my friends came to the same conclusion. ['Oh! oh!'] Well, I understand, then, that he did not say it; but what he did say was, that there was a great deal of sarcasm and invective in the despatch, and he read a passage to show that such was the

case. But the fact is that a great deal depends upon the reading. I could take a despatch of the noble Lord himself and read it in a manner that would perfectly astonish him. He said, if I am not mistaken, that if the House were to approve of that despatch as a proper despatch, then Lord Canning was not fit to occupy the meanest political or official situation. Indian despatches have, to my mind, never been very gentle. I recollect having read in *Mill's History of British India*, and in other histories also, despatches that have been sent from the President of the Board of Control, the Secret Committee and the Court of Directors, over and over again; and I have thought that they were written in a tone rather more authoritative and rather more dictatorial than I should have been disposed to write, or than I should have been pleased to receive. It arose from this—that in old times the magnates sitting in Leadenhall-street were writing, not to Lord Canning and men of that altitude, but to merchants and agents whom they had sent out, who were entirely dependent upon them, and to whom they could say just what they liked; and for 100 years past, as far as I have seen, their despatches have had a character for severity, and that which men call 'dictatorial,' which I think might be very well dispensed with. But that is a matter which should certainly be taken into consideration, when a large portion of this House are disposed not only to censure Lord Ellenborough, but to overturn the Government, because a despatch is not written precisely in those gentle terms which some hon. Gentlemen think to be right when inditing a letter to a Governor-General of India.

There is one other point which I must notice, and that is the supposed effect of this despatch upon the feelings of Lord Canning. I am not so intimate with Lord Canning as many Members of this House, but I have had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and have always believed that he was one of the last men who would knowingly do anything that was inhuman or unjust, and that is my opinion now. I think he is to be commiserated, as any other man would have been who happened to be in India at such a time as this; and I think we are bound also to take a lenient view even of such errors as we may think he has committed. If I had gone to India, or into any service under the State, I should expect that there would be a general disposition to give me fair play in the exercise of my office, and that no strained construction to my injury would be put upon anything which I did. Well, that is the view which I entertain with regard to Lord Canning. I have never uttered a syllable against him in public, although I think that some of his acts have been open to great objection; and I am not about to say anything against him now. I would not support a Resolution which was intended to damage Lord Canning; and I think the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) has not done wrong in offering to the House the Amendment he has placed before us. But it is just possible that Lord Canning is in the midst of circumstances which have rendered it very difficult, perhaps impossible, for him to exercise his own calm judgment on the great question which forms the subject of this Proclamation. I see in that Proclamation not so much an emanation from the humane and just mind of Lord Canning, as the offspring of that mixture of red tape and ancient tradition which is the foundation of the policy of the old civilian Council of Calcutta. But, Sir, if it were a question of hurting Lord Canning's feelings and denouncing this Proclamation, I could have no hesitation as to the choice which I should make. A man's private and personal feelings are not a matter of importance for the House when compared with the vast and permanent interests involved in the dangerous policy which we are now discussing. And I do not think the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cardwell), the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Viscount

Goderich), and the noble Lord the Member for London, have any right to throw themselves into something like a contortion of agony with regard to the manner of this despatch; because, as was stated to the House the other night by the learned Attorney-General for Ireland, they did not tell us much about the feelings of another public servant, acting on behalf of the Crown at a still greater distance from England, when last year they gave a vote on the China question which pronounced a most emphatic condemnation on the conduct of Sir John Bowring. Now, I like fair play. I would treat Lord Canning as I would treat Sir John Bowring; and I would treat Sir John Bowring as I would treat Lord Canning. Do not let us have in the service of the State low-caste men who may be trampled upon at pleasure, and high-caste men whom nobody dare criticise.

I said, when I began, that this Resolution is important in reference to something else besides India; that it is important with reference to the position of parties in this House. I would ask the attention of the House for a few moments to that branch of the subject. I am afraid—and I hope I am not slandering anybody in saying it—that there is quite as much zeal for what is called 'place' as there is for the good of India in the proposition brought before us. If that despatch had been published three months ago, when we were all sitting on that side of the House, it is very probable that many Gentlemen who now speak against it would have thought it a noble despatch, containing noble sentiments, expressed in noble language. But now, Sir, there has been for the last two months a growing irritation observable, particularly in this part of the House. There has been a feeling which no ingenuity has been able to disguise—a fear that if the present Government should, by some means or other, remain in office over the Session, no small difficulty would be found in displacing it—lest, like the tree, which, when first planted, may be easily pulled up, it should by-and-bye strike its roots downwards and its branches outwards, and after a year or two no man would be able to get it out of the ground. Hon. Gentlemen opposite know that I differ very widely from them on many public questions, and probably at some not distant day they may find it out in some act of severe hostility; but I put it to the House whether, out of doors, the reputation of the present Government is not, in many respects, better than the last? Take, for instance, the Gentlemen who come up from the country on various deputations to the Ministers—the judgment of these deputations, without an exception, is in favour of the manner in which they have been received by the present Ministers, and of the way in which their suggestions and requests have been treated. Now, this may be no great matter, and I do not say that it is; but I make the observation for the benefit of the Gentlemen who sit on these benches, because it is just possible that they may some time have to receive deputations again. Then take their conduct in this House. 'Oh, yes,' hon. Gentlemen may say, 'but they are a weak Government; they have not a majority, and they are obliged to be very civil.' But what I maintain is, that every Ministry ought to be very civil, and what I am prepared to assert is—and I ask every man on this side of the House if he does not agree with me, for I have heard dozens of them say it out of the House—that when the late Government were in office civility was a thing unknown.

Take another point—for it is worthy of consideration by Gentlemen on this side of the House, and I ask hon. Gentlemen who sit below the gangway especially to consider it—look at the heritage of trouble with regard to our foreign policy which the existing Government found on their accession to office. Three months of what was going on upon the Conspiracy Bill would have landed you on the very verge of a war, if not in a war, with France,

and that danger has been avoided certainly by no concession which is injurious to the honour of England. Take the question which has agitated the public mind with regard to Naples. I am not going into any details; but so far as a Government could act, this Government appears to have acted with judgment. I think the noble Lord below me (Lord J. Russell) admitted that himself. I did not say that the noble Lord said anything against them. On the contrary, I rejoice to have him with me as a witness to what I am stating. With regard, then, to these questions, seeing the dilemma into which the foreign affairs of the country were brought under the last Administration, I think it is but fair, just, and generous that Members on this side of the House, at least, should take no course which wears the colour of faction, for the purpose of throwing the present Government out of office. Whenever I join in a vote to put Gentlemen opposite out of office, it shall be for something that the country will clearly understand—something that shall offer a chance of good to some portion of the British empire—something that shall offer a chance of advancing distinctly the great principles for which we—if we are a party at all on this side of the House—profess to care.

But there is another reason. Not only is it feared that hon. Gentlemen opposite will get firm in their seats, but it is also feared that some hon. Gentlemen near me will get less firm in their alliance with the right hon. Gentlemen on this side. I have heard of mutinous meetings and discussions, and of language of the most unpardonable character uttered, as Gentlemen now say, in the heat of debate. But there was something more going on, which was traced to a meeting of independent Members recently held in Committee-room No. 11; and if a stop were not put to it, the powerful ranks on these benches might be broken up, which, if united, it was believed, would storm the Treasury benches and replace the late Government in office. I believe it was intended that a desperate effort should be made to change the state of things here before Whitsuntide. That was a resolution which had been come to long before any one knew anything about Lord Ellenborough's despatch. And the present seems to be a convenient opportunity, inasmuch as it has this in its favour, that it appears to be defending an absent servant of the Crown; that it appears to be teaching a lesson to the Government who have acted injudiciously in publishing a despatch; altogether it has that about it which makes it an excellent pretext on which hon. Gentlemen may ride into office. Now, I do not speak to Whigs in office or to those Gentlemen who have been in office and expect to be in office again: but I should like to say what I believe to be true to those Gentlemen who call themselves independent Members, who come here with no personal object to serve, not seeking place, patronage, or favour, but with an honest desire, as far as they are able, to serve their country as Members of the House of Commons. If this Resolution be carried, it is supposed that the old Government, or something very like it, will come back again. Now, there was great discontent with that old Government before it went out; yet no pledge whatever has been given that its conduct will be better or different; no new measures have been promised, no new policy has been avowed, no new men, that I have seen, have been held forth to the public very distinctly as likely to take high office in the State. There have been some things which I should think Members of this House must have felt pain at witnessing. There are newspapers in the interest of this ex-Treasury bench which have, in the most unblushing manner, published articles emanating from the pen of somebody who knew exactly what was wanted to be done. In the case of a gentleman, for example, who was engaged in Committee-room No. 11—a gentleman whom I need not mention,

because the House knows all the circumstances of this case, but a gentleman who took a most prominent part in the proceedings in that Committee-room—and no one is probably more indignant at what has been done than himself—those newspapers have positively fixed upon and designated him for a certain office, if the present Government go out and another comes in; another gentleman who seconded a Resolution on that occasion is also held up for an office; but they do not state exactly what his precise position is to be; and the glittering bauble of some place in the in-coming Government is hung up before many hon. Gentlemen who sit around me. It is not said, 'It is for you,' and 'It is for you;' but it is hung up dangling before them all, and every man is expected to covet that glittering bauble.

But this is not all. These are not the only arts which are employed. Members of this House sitting below the gangway, who have been here for years—Gentlemen of the most independent character—receive flattering and beautifully engraved cards to great parties at splendid mansions; and not later than Friday last, of all times, those invitations were scattered, if not with a more liberal, no doubt with a much more discriminating hand than they ever were before. [An hon. Member: 'Absurd!'] Of course it is very absurd; there is no doubt about that, and that is precisely why I am explaining it to the House. Why, Sir, if those cards of invitation contained a note with them, giving the exact history of what was really meant, it would say to hon. Gentlemen, 'Sir, we have measured your head, and we have gauged your soul, and we know or believe'—for I believe they do not know—'we believe that your principles which you came into Parliament to support—your character in the House—your self-respect will go for nothing if you have a miserable temptation like this held up before you.' Sir, if we could see them taking a course which is said to be taken by the celebrated horse-tamer, who appeals, as I am told, to the nobler and more intelligent instincts of the animal which he tames, then I should not complain. But they appeal to instincts which every honourable mind repudiates, and to aspirations which no hon. Gentleman on this side of the House can for a moment admit.

Well, then, if they succeed, what sort of a Government shall we have? I am as anxious for a Liberal Government as any man in this House, but I cannot believe that, in the present position of things on this side of the House, a Liberal and solid Government can be formed. We are told, and the whole country has been in a state of expectation and wonder upon it, that two eminent statesmen have actually dined together; and I am very glad to hear that men engaged in the strife of politics can dine together without personal hostility. I say nothing of the viands that were eaten. I say nothing of the beverage that was in the 'loving cup' that went round. One of our oldest and greatest poets has told us that—

'Nepenthe is a drink of soverayne grace.'

He says that it was devised by the gods to subdue contention, and subject the passions; but that it was given only to the aged and the wise, who were prepared by it to take their places with ancient heroes in a higher sphere. But that could not have been the contents of the 'loving cup' in this instance, for these aged statesmen are still determined to cling to this world, and to mix, as heretofore, with all the vigour and the fire of youth in the turmoil and contention of public life. But does the fact of this dinner point to reconciliation, and to a firm and liberal administration? I believe that any such Government would be the worst of all coalitions. I believe that it would be built upon insincerity, and I suspect it would be of no advantage to the country. Therefore I am not anxious to see such a Government attempted.

I ask the House, then, are they pre-

pared to overthrow the existing Government on the question which the right hon. Gentleman has brought before us —a question which he has put in such ambiguous terms? Are they willing in overthrowing that Government to avow the policy of this Proclamation for India? Are they willing to throw the country into all the turmoil of a general election—a general election at a moment when the people are but just slowly recovering from the effects of the most tremendous commercial panic that this country ever passed through? Are they willing to delay all legislation for India till next year, and all legislation on the subject of Parliamentary reform till the year after that? Are they willing, above all, to take the responsibility which will attach to them if they avow the policy contained in this Proclamation?

I confess, Sir, I am terrified for the future of India when I look at the indiscriminate slaughter which is now going on there. I have seen a letter, written, I believe, by a missionary, lately inserted in a most respectable weekly newspaper published in London, in which the writer estimates that 10,000 men have been put to death by hanging alone. I ask you, whether you approve of having in India such expressions as these, which I have taken this day from a Calcutta newspaper, and which undoubtedly you will be held to approve if you do anything which can be charged with a confirmation of the tenor of this Proclamation. Here is an extract from *The Englishman*, which, speaking of the men of the disarmed regiments, who amount to some 20,000 or 30,000, or even 40,000 men, says:—

'There is no necessity to bring every Sepoy to a court-martial, and convict him of mutinous intentions before putting him down as guilty. We do not advocate extreme or harsh measures, nor are we of those who would drench the land with blood; but we have no hesitation in saying, that, were the Government to order the execution of all these Sepoys, they would be legally and morally justified in doing so. There would be no injustice done.'

No injustice would be done! I ask the House to consider that these men have committed no offence; their military functions were suspended because it was thought they were likely to be tempted to commit an offence, and therefore their arms were taken from them; and now an Englishman—one of your own countrymen—writing in a newspaper published in Calcutta, utters sentiments so atrocious as those which I have just read to the House. I believe the whole of India is now trembling under the action of volcanic fires; and we shall be guilty of the greatest recklessness, and I will say of great crime against the Monarchy of England, if we do anything by which we shall own this Proclamation. I am asked on this question to overturn Her Majesty's Government. The policy adopted by the Government on this subject is the policy that was cheered by hon. Members on this side when it was first announced. It is a policy of mercy and conciliation. False—may I not say?—or blundering leaders of this party would induce us, contrary to all our associations and all our principles, to support an opposite policy. I am willing to avow that I am in favour of justice and conciliation—of the law of justice and of kindness. Justice and mercy are the supreme attributes of the perfection which we call Deity, but all men everywhere comprehend them; there is no speech nor language in which their voice is not heard, and they cannot be vainly exercised with regard to the docile and intelligent millions of India. You have had the choice. You have tried the sword. It has broken; it now rests broken in your grasp; and you stand humbled and rebuked. You stand humbled and rebuked before the eyes of civilised Europe. You may have another chance. You may, by possibility, have another opportunity of governing India. If you have, I beseech you to

make the best use of it. Do not let us pursue such a policy as many men in India, and some in England, have advocated, but which hereafter you will have to regret, which can end only, as I believe, in something approaching to the ruin of this country, and which must, if it be persisted in, involve our name and nation in everlasting disgrace.

INDIA.

IV.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, AUGUST 1, 1859.

From Hansard.

[On August 1 Sir Charles Wood made his financial statement on India to the House of Commons. One of his proposals was that the Government should be empowered to raise 5,000,000*l.* in the United Kingdom in order to meet the demands of the present year. The Loan Bill passed through both Houses.]

I HAVE so often addressed the House upon the question of India that I feel some hesitation in asking a portion of the time of the Committee this evening. But notwithstanding an observation of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for India that he does not see anything gloomy in the future of India, I confess that to my view the question assumes yearly a greater magnitude, and I may say a greater peril. I think, therefore, that having given some attention to this subject in years past, I may be permitted to bring my share, be its value more or less, to the attempt which we are now making to confront this great evil. When we recollect how insufficient are the statements which he has from India, the right hon. Gentleman has given us as clear an account of the finances of India as it was possible for him to do, and looking at them in the most favourable point of view we come to this conclusion:—We have what we have had for twenty years, only more rapidly accumulating, deficit on deficit and debt on debt.

The right hon. Gentleman told the Committee that when he left the Government of India, I think in 1855, everything was in a most satisfactory condition. Well, it did happen in that year, perhaps by some of that kind of management which I have observed occasionally in Indian finance, that the deficit was brought down to a sum not exceeding 150,000*l.* [Sir C. Wood: 'There was a surplus of 400,000*l.*'] The deficit, I believe, before the mutiny was 143,000*l.* But, if the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to take the three years preceding the mutiny, I think that will give a much fairer idea of the real state of the case, and it is not the least use shutting our eyes to the real state of the case, because some day or other it will find us out, or we shall find it out. The real state of the case in the three years preceding the mutiny, 1855, 1856, and 1857, ending the 30th of April, is a deficit of 2,823,000*l.*, being an average not very far short of 1,000,000*l.* a-year. That is the state of things immediately after the right hon. Gentleman left office. I do not in the least find fault with him. He did not make the deficit, but I merely state this to show that things are not at the moment in that favourable state which the right hon. Gentleman would

induce the Committee to believe. Keeping our attention to that period, there is another point of view, which is also very important. It appears to me that any Government must be an excessively bad Government which cannot defray its expenses out of the taxes which it levies on its people. We know, and every one has for years known, that in India there is a source of revenue, not from taxes levied on the people, but from opium, and which is very like the revenue derived by the Peruvian Government from guano. If we turn to those three years and see what relation the expenditure of the Government had to taxes levied on the people of India, we shall find, though we may hear that the taxes are not so much as we imagine, or that the people are extremely poor, or that the Government is very extravagant—we shall find that the sum levied for the sale of opium and transit was no less than 10,500,000*l.*, and if we add that to the 2,800,000*l.*, we get a sum of 13,300,000*l.*, which is the exact sum which the Government of India cost in those three years over and above what was raised from the people by actual taxation. I say that this is a state of things which ought to cause alarm, because we know, and we find it stated in the last despatches, that the income derived from opium is of a precarious character, and from the variation of climate in India, or from a variation of policy in the Chinese Government, that revenue may suddenly either be very much impaired or be cut off altogether

The right hon. Gentleman brings us to the condition in which we are now, and it may be stated in the fewest possible words to be this,—that the debt of India has been constantly rising, and that it amounts now to 100,000,000*l.* sterling. ['No, no!'] The right hon. Gentleman said 95,000,000*l.*, but he said there would be 5,000,000*l.* next year, and I will undertake to say that it is fair to argue on the basis that the debt of India at this moment is about 100,000,000*l.*, that there is a deficit of 12,000,000*l.* this year, and that there may be expected to be a deficit of 10,000,000*l.* next year. It is not to be wondered at that it should be difficult to borrow money on Indian account.

I am not surprised at the hon. Member for Kendal (Mr. Glyn) being so lively in the House to-night, and other hon. Gentlemen connected with the City, who, I understand, have been impressing on the Secretary of State the fact that money cannot be had in the City for the purpose for which he wants it. I do not wonder that it is difficult to raise money on Indian account. I should think it extraordinary if it could be borrowed without a high rate of interest. That it can be borrowed at all can only arise from the fact that England, whatever disasters she gets into, generally contrives, by the blood of her soldiers or by the taxation of her people, to scramble through her difficulties, and to maintain before the world, though by enormous sacrifices, a character for good faith which is scarcely held by any other country in the world. With regard to the question of an Imperial guarantee, I take an opposite view from the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) on that particular point, though I agree with what he said as to certain expenses thrown on the Indian Government.

Last year I referred to the enormous expense of the Affghan war—about 15,000,000*l.*—the whole of which ought to have been thrown on the taxation of the people of England, because it was a war commanded by the English Cabinet, for objects supposed to be English, but which, in my opinion, were of no advantage either to England or India. It was most unjust that this enormous burden should have been thrown upon the finances of the Indian Government. But I do not oppose an Imperial guarantee because I particularly sympathize with the English taxpayers in this matter. I think the English taxpayers have generally neglected (all) the affairs of India, and might be left to pay for it. But there was no justice in imposing on the unfortunate millions of India the

burden of a policy with which they had nothing to do, and which could not bring any one of them a single handful of rice more—it did bring them rather less than more—than they would have eaten without it. But I object to an Imperial guarantee on this ground,—if we let the Services of India, after exhausting the resources of India, put their hands into the pockets of the English people, the people of England having no control over the Indian expenditure, it is impossible to say to what lengths of unimagined extravagance they would go; and in endeavouring to save India may we not go far towards ruining England?

But look at this question of Indian finance from another point of view. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for India have both referred to the enormous amount of the whole taxation of India taken by the Military Service. I believe it has been shown that at this moment almost, if not altogether, the whole of the net revenue of India is being absorbed by the Military Service of that empire; that not a farthing is left out of the whole net revenue of India to pay the expenses of the civil government or the public creditor. If we leave out the opium duty, perhaps we shall see how far the Military Service bears on the taxation of India; we shall see that more than its net amount is absorbed by the Military Service. That is a state of things that has never existed in any other country or among any other people, for any considerable period, without bringing that country to anarchy and ruin. We have been told by the Governor-General, that the great bulk of the revenue of India is not elastic; that with regard to the land-tax there has been for a long period no increase in it; that, on the contrary, that large source of income has decreased. He tells us, further, that the army cannot, at present, be largely reduced with safety. If so, what is the end to which we must come? Either the Government of India must come to an end, or England itself must become tributary to India. Seeing that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has within the last fortnight asked 70,000,000*l*. of the English taxpayer for the expenses of the English Government, to ask nine or ten millions more for the Government of India would certainly cause great dissatisfaction in this country. The picture is, to my mind, an alarming one, notwithstanding the cheerful view taken of it by the Secretary for India; and it has filled many besides myself with dismay.

Now, looking round for modes of escape from this position, I believe they exist, if we had the courage to adopt them. An hon. Friend has asked me, 'Is there nobody to tell the House of Commons the truth on this matter?' I might ask why he has not done it himself. I suppose he is afraid of being thought rash; but his advice is, that the Government should re-establish the independence of the Punjab, recall the Ameers of Scinde, restore the Government of the King of Oude, giving to it the dependency of Nagpore. I confess, whether it be rash or not, that I think it would be wise to restore the Government of the Punjab and to give independence to that province which is called Scinde, because as no revenue is received from that part of the country in excess of the expense which its retention causes to this country, we should endeavour to bring our dominions in India within a reasonable and manageable compass. No policy can be more lunatic than the policy of annexation we have pursued of late years in India, and the calamity we are now meeting is the natural and inevitable consequence of the folly we have committed. It is not easy for great generals and statesmen who have been made earls and marquesses and had bronze statues put up in their honour in our public squares —it is not easy for the statesmen who have done all this to turn round and reverse it all; they have not the moral courage to do it; it might be an act of peril; it might appear a descent from the summit of empire and be wrongly

construed throughout the world. But as a question of finance and good government we should, a few years hence, admit that it was a sound policy. But I will not pursue this subject, for I may fairly take it for granted that the House of Commons and the Government of England are not likely to take such a course till we are reduced to some extremity even greater than that which now meets us.

But there is another course that may fairly be recommended. It is to take India as it is, the empire with all your annexations as it stands, and to see if it is not possible to do something better with it than you have done before, and to give it a chance in future years of redeeming not only the character of the Government but its financial and legislative position. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) says there cannot be any great diminution in the expenditure for the Civil Service of India; but I do not in the least agree with the Secretary for India when he says that the gentlemen of the Civil Service in that country are not overpaid. Every one knows that they are overpaid; except some very high-salaried bishops of whom we have heard, no men are so grossly overpaid as the officials of the Civil Service in India. The proof of this may be found everywhere. Look at the Island of Ceylon; there the duties are as arduous and the climate as unfavourable as in India; yet the Government does not pay its officials there more than one-half or two-thirds of the salaries they are paid in India. There are in India itself many hundreds of Europeans, the officers of the Indian army, all the Indian clergy, and missionaries; there are also English merchants, carrying on their business at rates of profit not much exceeding the profits made in this country. But the Civil Service of the Indian Government, like everything privileged and exclusive, is a pampered body; and, notwithstanding it has produced some few able men who have worthily done their duty, I do not think the Civil Service of India deserves the loud praise we have so frequently heard awarded to it by speakers in this House. Now if you could reduce the expense of the Civil Service by any considerable amount, the best thing you could do with the money would be to increase the establishment by sending a greater number of competent persons as magistrates, collectors, and officials into the distant provinces, and thereby double the facilities for good government in those districts. If you could reduce the income of the Civil Service one half, you could for the same money have a more efficient Service throughout India than at present. You might not save money, but you would get a more complete Service for it.

But the military question the House of Commons will certainly have to take in hand; though Secretaries for India are afraid to grapple with it. I am not astonished that they feel some hesitation in doing so, for from every one connected with the Military Service they would hear the strongest objections to reducing the number of the troops. But let me ask the Committee to consider what it has just heard. Before the Revolt the European troops in India numbered 45,000 and the Native troops 250,000; now the 45,000 European troops are 110,000, and the 250,000 Native soldiers are raised to 300,000. What was it that we heard during the Indian mutiny; what was the cause of all the letters that appeared in the newspapers? Every man said that the great evil was having a Native army far larger than was required. That has been the source of peril, and that was the real cause of the mutiny. Now we have even a larger portion of this most perilous element than we had before. The authorities of India do not appear to have learnt anything from the mutiny, or they have learnt that all that was said in this House and in this country was untrue, because they have 50,000 more Native troops than they had before the mutiny. Therefore, the mode of argument appears to be this:—A Native army was the cause of the

mutiny, the cause of all our perils, and now it is necessary to have more of it; and, as that is the perilous element, of course 45,000 troops are not sufficient to keep them in check; therefore, you have at present 110,800; and certain officers who were examined, and the Commissioners who reported, recommended that you should always have at least 80,000 Europeans there. If we are only to have one body of troops to watch another, it seems to me there can be no hope of any diminution of our military force, nor any real reduction in our expenditure. Why is it that you require all this army? Let me ask the Committee to look at the matter as sensible men of business. The Revolt, which has been such a terrible affair, has been suppressed. It was suppressed mainly by the 45,000 men in India, and not by the 110,000 you have succeeded in placing there at a later period. More than that, there is not at the present moment any alarming amount of dissatisfaction in India, or at least the dissatisfied are dispirited, and have lost all hope of resisting the power of England, and must for a long period, I think, remain wholly dispirited. At the same time, you have disarmed the people over a vast province. There are millions of people in India, a great number of whom were previously in possession of arms, who do not now possess a single weapon. I have seen in the last accounts, only a day or two since, a statement that not less than 1,400 forts in the kingdom of Oude alone have been destroyed, and we know that many more have been destroyed in other parts. There is at this moment no power for combined organized armed resistance against you, except that which is in the Native army, which the Indian Government has been building up of late to a greater extent than ever.

The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) spoke of one point—the great importance of which I admit—the want of confidence and sympathy that must have arisen between the two races in consequence of the transactions of the last two years. The shock of revolt must have created great suspicion and hatred and fear, and there is nothing out of which panic grows so easily as out of those conditions. I believe that is the case in India, and perhaps there are indications of something of the kind at home. There is a panic, therefore, and neither the Governor-General nor the Civil Service nor military officers can make up their minds that they are safe, recollecting the transactions of the past two years, in having a less military force than we now have in India. But if you ask those gentlemen they will never say they have enough. There are admirals here, as we know, who are perfectly wild about ships, with whom arithmetic on such a question goes for nothing. They would show you in the clearest possible manner that you have not ships enough. So also, although I am glad to find not to the same extent, as to troops. Some one said the other night, in answer to an hon. Gentleman, about an increased force of a particular kind, 'There is nothing like leather,' and it is so. I say naval officers and military officers are not the men to whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer should depute the great and solemn duty of determining what amount shall be expended for military purposes. There is not a country in the world that would not have been bankrupt long since, and plunged into irretrievable ruin, if the military authorities had been allowed to determine the amount of military force to be kept up, and the amount of revenue to be devoted to that purpose.

I have another objection to this great army, and I now come to the question of policy, which, I am sorry to say for India, has not been touched upon. I do not think this is a question to be merely settled by a very clever manner of giving the figures of the case. Those figures depend upon the course you intend to pursue, upon the policy which the Government intends to adopt, in that country. With this great army two things are certain—we can have

no reform of any kind in the Government of India, nor an improved conduct on the part of the English in India towards the Natives of India. With a power like this—110,000 English troops, with an English regiment within an hour's reach of each civil servant, you will find that the supremacy of the conquering race will be displayed in the most offensive manner.

Everybody connected with India—the hon. Member for Devonport (Sir Erskine Perry), the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Colonel Sykes)—all who are connected with India, know well that when the English were feeble in India, when they had not a great army in the field or a great revenue to support it, every Englishman treated the Natives by whom he was surrounded rather with the feeling that he was an intruder in the country, and that it was not only proper but absolutely necessary to deal in a conciliatory and just manner with the great body of the Natives of India; but precisely as our power increased the conduct of our countrymen changed, and I find in the excellent book of Mr. Shore that thirty years ago he describes this as the very source of the growing ill feeling between the races in India. It has grown from that time to this, until we have an irritation and animosity which in our time, it may be, we shall see very little removed, and which may perhaps never be wholly allayed. A Government, then, with this vast army, must always be in a difficulty. Lord Canning—Lord anybody else—cannot turn his attention to anything but this wearing, exasperating question of how money is to be got for the next quarter to pay this army. He cannot turn his attention in any way to reforms, and I am convinced that this House must insist upon the Government reducing its army, whatever be the risk. A large army will render it impossible for you to hold the country, for you will have a constantly increasing debt, and anarchy must inevitably overwhelm you in the end. A small army, a moderate, conciliatory, and just Government, with the finances in a prosperous condition;—and I know not but that this country may possess for generations and centuries a share, and a large share, in the government of those vast territories which it has conquered.

As to measures of reduction, I admit that it is of little use attempting them unless they are accompanied by other changes. Here I have a charge to bring against the Indian Government. I did hope when the noble Lord spoke to-night that he would have told us something which I am sure he must have known; that there is no such thing as a real Government in India at all; that there is no responsibility either to a public opinion there, or to a public opinion at home; and that therefore we cannot expect a better policy or happier results. Let hon. Gentlemen imagine a Government like that in India, over which the payers of the taxes have not the slightest control; for the great body of the people in India have, as we all know, no control in any way over the Government. Neither is there any independent English opinion that has any control over the Government, the only opinions being those of the Government itself, or those of the Military and Civil Services, and chiefly of the latter. They are not the payers of taxes; they are the spenders and the enjoyers of the taxes, and therefore the Government in India is in the most unfortunate position possible for the fulfilment of the great duties that must devolve upon every wise and just Government. The Civil Service, being privileged, is arrogant, and I had almost said tyrannous, as any one may see who reads the Indian papers, which mainly represent the opinion of that Service and the Military Service, which, as everywhere else where it is not checked by the resolution of the taxpayers and civilians, is clamorous and insatiable for greater expenditure. The Governor-General himself,—and I do not make any attack upon Lord Canning, although I could conceive a Governor-General more suited to his great and difficult

position,—he is a creature of these very Services.

I now ask the noble Lord to remember a case which happened during the time he held office, and if the Committee will allow me, for the sake of illustration, to refer to it, I do not think it will be any waste of time. Hon. Gentlemen will recollect that during the last year, my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. J. B. Smith), who has paid great attention to Indian subjects, put a question to the noble Lord relating to the annexation of a small territory called Dhar. What has been the course of events in relation to that case? The news of the annexation reached this country on the 20th of March last year. Upon the 23rd the question was put in this House, when the hon. Member for Inverness (Mr. Baillie), then Under-Secretary, replied, that the Government had just been informed of it by the Governor-General, and that he was solely responsible for the act, the Government here having had no previous communication upon it. Upon the 11th of June the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) announced to the House, in answer to a question, that he had disallowed the annexation of Dhar. The despatch disallowing it has since been laid upon the table. It is dated June 22, and it asks for information from the Governor-General. In India they assumed this unfortunate Rajah to be guilty of misdemeanour, because his troops had revolted, and the noble Lord in his despatch said, as I think very sensibly, 'If we cannot keep our own troops, what argument is it for overturning the independence of the territory of Dhar, seeing that the Rajah himself has been faithful towards us, but his troops have rebelled?' The noble Lord asked for further information. In the preceding April the Ranee, the mother or stepmother of the Rajah, a mere boy of thirteen, sent two memorials to the Governor-General, one by post, and the other through the local British officer, remonstrating against the annexation, and proving, as far as she could, that the Rajah had not been guilty of any wrong against us. This memorial was not acknowledged until August, when the Secretary for the Government of India desired the Ranee to forward the memorial through the Governor-General's agent in Central India. In April these papers were laid upon the table of the House with one exception. The Ranee's memorial was not included in those papers.

Now, when those papers were laid before the House, why was not that memorial, relating to the annexed territory, sent home and printed with the other papers, so that hon. Members of this House might have read it? The letter of the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) was dated the 22nd of June, 1858, and to this hour it has never been answered. The noble Lord's despatch disallowed the annexation; it condemned it, and asked for information. From the date of that despatch to this present 1st of August, 1859, there has not come any official information from the Governor-General as to what he has done, or any answer to the noble Lord's despatch, although sixteen months have elapsed. I say it is not fitting that the Secretary of State for India should be treated with utter disregard, if not with something like contempt, by any great satrap who happens to be sent out to govern any of the provinces of this country. This very case shows, that in the midst of the terrible hurricane of the mutiny, the thirst for annexation was unslaked. At the very moment, or just before, that the Queen issued her gracious Proclamation here, the Government in India annexed the territory of this Rajah, a boy of thirteen years of age, manifesting at the same time an utter disregard of the Government at home and the just sentiments, if they could have been ascertained, of the whole body of the people of this country. And this must be so as long as you have a Government like that of Calcutta. Procrastination is its very nature.

The noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley) did an excellent thing. He did honour to himself by appointing a man of a new sort as Governor of Madras. I have not much acquaintance with Sir C. Trevelyan, but I believe him to be a very intelligent man and very earnest for the good of India. But he finds that at Madras he is like a man who is manacled, as all the Governors are. He is able to do almost nothing. But he has a spirit above being the passive instrument for doing nothing in the hands of the Governor-General, and he has been disposed to make several changes which have looked exceedingly heterodox to those who are connected with the old Government of India, and which have shocked the nerves of the fifteen old gentlemen who meet in Leadenhall-street, and their brethren in India. I find that among the changes endeavoured to be effected by Sir C. Trevelyan, the following are enumerated:—He has endeavoured to conciliate the Natives by abolishing certain ceremonial distinctions which were supposed to degrade them when visiting the Government House; he has shown that personal courtesy to them which appears to be too much neglected in India; he has conspicuously rewarded those who have rendered services to the State; he has made one of the Natives his aide-de-camp; he has endeavoured to improve the land tenure, to effect a settlement of the Enam, and to abolish the impress of cattle and carts. He has also abolished three-fourths, or perhaps more, of the paper work of the public servants. He also began the great task of judicial reform, than which none is more urgently pressing. But what is said of Sir C. Trevelyan for instituting these reforms? He has raised a hornets' nest about him. Those who surround the Governor-General at Calcutta say, 'We might as well have the Governors of the Presidencies independent, if they are to do as they like without consulting the Governor-General as has been done in past times.' The *Friend of India* is a journal not particularly scrupulous in supporting the Calcutta Government, but it has a horror of any Government of India except that of the Governor-General and the few individuals who surround him. A writer in the *Friend of India* says:—

'Sir C. Trevelyan relies doubtless on Lord Stanley, and we do not dream of denying that the Secretary of State has provocation enough to excuse the unusual course he seems obliged to pursue. To send a reform to Calcutta is, at present, simply to lay it aside. It will probably not even be answered for two years, certainly not carried in five. Even when sanctioned, it will have to pass through a crucible through which no plan can escape entire. That weary waiting for Calcutta, of which all men, from Lord Stanley to the people of Singapore, now bitterly complain, may well tempt the Secretary to carry on his plans by the first mode offered to his hand.'

Here are only a dozen lines from a long article, and there are other articles in the same paper to the same purport. I think, then, that I am justified in condemning any Secretary for India who contents himself with giving us the figures necessary to show the state of the finances, which any clerk in the office could have done, and abstains from going into the questions of the government of India and that policy upon which alone you can base any solid hope of an improvement in the condition of that country.

There is another point I would mention. The Governor-General of India goes out knowing little or nothing of India. I know exactly what he does when he is appointed. He shuts himself up to study the first volumes of Mr. Mill's *History of India*, and he reads through this laborious work without nearly so much effect in making him a good Governor-General as a man might ignorantly suppose. He goes to India, a country of twenty nations, speaking twenty languages. He knows none of those nations, and he has not a glimmer

of the grammar and pronunciation or meaning of those languages. He is surrounded by half-a-dozen or a dozen gentlemen who have been from fifteen to forty years in that country, and who have scrambled from the moderate but sure allowance with which they began in the Service to the positions they now occupy. He knows nothing of the country or the people, and they are really unknown to the Government of India. To this hour the present Governor-General has not travelled through any considerable portion of the territory of India. If he did, he would have to pay an increased insurance upon his life for travelling through a country in which there are very few roads and no bridges at all. Observe the position, then, in which the Governor-General is placed. He is surrounded by an official circle, he breathes an official air, and everything is dim or dark beyond it. You lay duties upon him which are utterly beyond the mental or bodily strength of any man who ever existed, and which he cannot therefore adequately perform.

Turning from the Governor-General to the Civil Service, see how short the period is in which your servants in that country remain in any particular office. You are constantly criticising the bad customs of the United States, where every postmaster and many other officers lose their situations, and where others are appointed whenever a new President is elected. You never make blunders like the United States, and you will therefore be surprised at a statement given in evidence by Mr. Underhill, the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society. He says that in certain districts in Bengal there are three or four Englishmen to 1,000,000 inhabitants, and that the magistrates are perpetually moving about. I have here the names of several gentlemen cited. Mr. Henry Lushington went to India in 1821, and remained till 1842. During these twenty-one years he filled twenty-one different offices; he went to Europe twice, being absent from India not less than four and a quarter years. Upon an average, therefore, he held his twenty-one offices not more than nine months each. Mr. J. P. Grant was Governor of Bengal. That was so good a place that he remained stationary in it. But he went to India in 1828 and remained there until 1841. In those thirteen years he held twenty-four different situations, being an average of less than six months for each. Mr. Charles Grant—and I may say that Grant is a name which for three or four generations has been found everywhere in India,—he was in India from 1829 to 1842, and in those thirteen years he filled seventeen offices, being an average of only eight months for each office. Mr. Halliday, Governor of Bengal, went to India in 1825, and remained until 1843. In those eighteen years he held twenty-one offices, and he did not become stationary until he was accredited to the lucrative and great office of Governor of Bengal.

I think these facts show that there is something in the arrangements of the Indian Government which makes it no Government at all, except for the purpose of raising money and spending taxes. It is no Government for watching over the people and conferring upon them those blessings which we try to silence our consciences by believing the British Government is established in India to promote. What can a Governor-General do with such a Council, and with servants who are ever changing in all the departments? I am not stating my own opinion, but what is proved by the blue-books. Mr. Halliday stated that the police of Bengal were more feared than the thieves and dacoits. But how is this Government, so occupied and so embarrassed, to be expected to put the police on a satisfactory footing? With regard to justice, I might appeal to any gentleman who has been in India whether, for the most part, the Judges in the Company's Courts are not without training, and if they are without training, whether they will not probably be without law. The delay is

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something of which we can have no conception, even with our experience of the Court of Chancery in this country. Perjury and wrong are universal wherever the Courts of the Company's Service have been established in India. Of their taxation we hear enough to-night. It is clumsy and unscientific. In their finance there is such confusion that the Government proposes to send out somebody, not to raise revenue, not to spend it, but somebody who will be able to tell you how it is raised and spent, for that is what you want to know. They have no system of book-keeping whatever. The Secretary of State gives us a statement of revenue and expenditure up to the 30th of April, 1858, sixteen months back, and even for the year preceding he can only furnish what he calls an 'estimate.' Would any other Legislative Assembly in the whole world, except this, tolerate such a state of things? I did try myself several years ago to get a statement of the accounts up to a later period; but I found it was of no use. They ought to be brought up to a later period; the thing is quite within the range of possibility; it is simply not done because there is no proper system of book-keeping, and no one responsible for not doing it.

You have no Government in India; you have no financial statement; you have no system of book-keeping; no responsibility; and everything goes to confusion and ruin because there is such a Government, or no Government, and the English House of Commons has not taken the pains to reform these things. The Secretary of State to-night points to the increase in the English trade. In that trade I am myself interested, and I am delighted to see that increase; but it should be borne in mind that just now it is not a natural increase, and therefore not certain to be permanent. If you are spending so many millions in railroads and in carrying on war—that is, 22,000,000*l.* for your armaments in India instead of 12,000,000*l.*—is not that likely to make a great difference in your power to import more largely from this country? Do not we know that when the Government of the day was pouring English treasure into the Crimea the trade with the Levant was most materially increased? And, therefore, I say it will be a delusion for the right hon. Gentleman to expect that the extraordinary increase which has taken place within the last three years will go on in future in the same proportion.

Now, the point which I wish to bring before the Committee and the Government is this, because it is on this that I rely mainly—I think I may say almost entirely—for any improvement in the future of India. It would be impertinent to take up the time of the Committee by merely cavilling at what other people have said, and pointing out their errors and blunders, if I had no hope of being able to suggest any improvement in the existing state of things. I believe a great improvement may be made, and by a gradual progress that will dislocate nothing. I dare say it may disappoint some individuals, but where it will disappoint one man in India it will please a thousand. What you want is to decentralize your Government. I hold it to be manifestly impossible to govern 150,000,000 of persons, composing twenty different nations, speaking as many different languages, by a man who knows nothing of India, assisted by half-a-dozen councillors belonging to a privileged order, many of whom have had very little experience in India, except within narrow limits, and whose experience never involved the consideration and settlement of great questions of statesmanship. If you could have an independent Government in India for every 20,000,000 of its people, I do not hesitate to say, though we are so many thousand miles away, that there are Englishmen who, settling down among those 20,000,000 of people, would be able to conduct the Government of that particular province on conditions wholly different and immeasurably better than anything in the way of administration which we have ever seen in India.

If I were Secretary of State for India,—but as I am not, I will recommend the right hon. Gentleman to do that which I would do myself, or I would not hold his office for one month; because, to hold office and come before the House Session after Session with a gloomy statement, and with no kind of case to show that you are doing anything for India, or that you are justified in holding possession of it at all, is nothing but to receive a salary and to hold a dignity without any adequate notion of the high responsibility attaching to them. I am not blaming the right hon. Gentleman in particular; he is only doing what all his predecessors before him have done. There has been no real improvement since I have sat in Parliament in the government of India, and I believe the Bill of last year is not one whit better for purposes of administration than any that has gone before. But I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman, whether it would not be a good thing to bring in a Bill to extend and define the powers of the Governors of the various Presidencies in India? I do not ask the right hon. Gentleman to turn out the fifteen gentlemen who assist him in Leadenhall-street to vegetate on their pensions, but I ask him to go to India and to take the Presidency of Madras for an instance. Let arrangements be made by which that Presidency shall be in a position to correspond directly with him in this country, and let every one connected with that Government of Madras feel that, with regard to the interests and the people of that Presidency, they will be responsible for their protection. At present there is no sort of tie between the governors and the governed. Why is it that we should not do for Madras what has been done for the Island of Ceylon? I am not about to set up the Council of Ceylon as a model institution—it is far from that; but I will tell you what it is, and you will see that it would not be a difficult thing to make the change I propose. The other day I asked a gentleman holding an office in the Government, and who had lived some years in Ceylon, what was the state of the Council? He said it was composed of sixteen members, of whom six were non-official and independent, and the Governor had always a majority. He added that at the present moment in that Council there was one gentleman, a pure Cingalese by birth and blood, another a Brahmin, another a half-caste, whose father was a Dutchman and whose mother was a Native, and three others who were either English merchants or planters. The Council has not much *prestige*, and therefore it is not easy to induce merchants in the interior to be members and to undertake its moderate duties; but the result is that this Cingalese, this Brahmin, this half caste, and these three Englishmen, although they cannot out-vote Sir H. Ward, the Governor, are able to discuss questions of public interest in the eye and the ear of the public, and to tell what the independent population want, and so to form a representation of public opinion in the Council, which I will undertake to say, although so inefficient, is yet of high importance in the satisfactory government of that island. Why is it that we can have nothing like this in the Councils of Madras or Bombay? It would be an easy thing to do, and I believe that an Act of Parliament which would do it would lay the foundation of the greatest reform that has yet taken place in India. At present all the Governors are in fetters; and I see that blame has been imputed to Sir Charles Trevelyan for endeavouring to break through those fetters. No doubt an attempt will be made to have him recalled, but I hope that the right hon. Gentleman, while he moderates the ardour of the Governor so far as to prevent a rebellion among the civilians, will support him honestly and faithfully in all those changes which the right hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do are essential to the improvement of the government of that country.

There is yet another question, and that is, what is to be done with regard

to the people of India on the subject of education, and especially with reference to the matter of religious instruction? I beg the right hon. Gentleman to be cautious how he takes the advice of any gentleman in this country, who may ask him to make changes in the established order of things there by appearing in the slightest degree to attempt to overthrow the caste and religion of the Natives of India. I have here an extract from a letter written by a gentleman who was present at one of the ceremonies of reading the Queen's Proclamation in November last. He says:—

'Not less than 7,000 Natives of all ranks and conditions and religions flocked to the esplanade at Tellicherry, where there was no show but the parading of a company of Sepoys, who fired a *feu de joie* very badly, to hear the Queen's Proclamation read. All who heard, all who heard not, manifested the deepest interest in it. The pledged inviolability of their religion and their lands spread like wildfire through the crowd, and was soon in every man's mouth. Their satisfaction was unbounded. ...I mentioned that I went to Tellicherry to hear the Queen's Proclamation read. We have since had it read here (Anjarakandy). You will see an account of what took place on the occasion in the accompanying copy of an official report I addressed to the assistant-magistrate. What I have described understates the feeling manifested by the people. They were all eyes and ears, listening breathlessly to what was being read. You will observe that convening them for any public purpose whatever, except here, was a thing unknown, and would have been a thing scouted under the Company's Government. Here I always assemble them, communicate everything they ought to know and hear, and talk it over with them. But a Queen's Proclamation is not an every-day affair, so they came in crowds, and I will venture to say that there is not another place in the Queen's India where it was so clearly explained to them or so thoroughly understood. But the impartial toleration of their religion and caste was the be-all and end-all of their comments, praise, and individual satisfaction. One Mafitta said, "They had had scores of proclamations upon every conceivable subject, but never one so wise and sensible as this."'

The East India Company was a wonderful Company for writing despatches. There was nothing so Christian as their doctrine, nothing so unchristian as their conduct. That Proclamation has in it the basis of all you should aim at in future in India—a regard to the sacredness of their property, and the sacredness of their religion, and an extension to them of as regular and full justice as is shown to your own countrymen. Depend upon it these Natives of India can comprehend this as well as we comprehend it; and, if you treat them as we are treated, and as they ought to be treated, you will not require 400,000 men to help you to govern a people who are notoriously among the most industrious and most peaceable to be found on the face of the earth. There has lately been an act done by the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) to which I must allude. Why he did it I do not know. I am sure the noble Lord did not mean to do an act of injustice—though very great injustice has been done. A question was put the other night about a Native of India who had come to this country to qualify himself for entering into competition for employment in the Civil Service of his country. I have seen that young gentleman, and conversed with him; and when I state his case, it will be seen whether he has been treated well or wisely, though the regulation under which he has suffered may have been made without any reference to him individually. He arrived in this country in June, 1856, and remained preparing himself for competition for two years and a-half till December, 1858, when a new regulation came out, which made twenty-two instead of twenty-three years of age the period for entering the Civil Service. He might have been ready

for competition in July, 1860, but he could not be ready in July, 1859. Under these circumstances he would be past the age of twenty-two before he could be able to present himself for examination. The consequence is, that he has been obliged to turn himself to another channel for employment. His father is an assistant-builder in the Government dockyard of Bombay, and has been in England. There was great interest excited among the Natives when the young man left India to come to England, and there is great disappointment among his friends at the result. He has been laughed at for trusting the Government, and it is said that while Government go on changing their regulations in this way no faith can be put in them. Now this is the first case of this kind that has happened. This young gentleman (or his father) has expended 1,500*l.* in coming here and in endeavouring to get the best education, solely with a view to be suited for the Civil Service. If he had entered into that Civil Service a great thing would have been accomplished. The result would have been that the House and the Secretary for India would have seen that it was very unjust, while the son of any one here could pursue his studies at home and enter into competition for the Civil Service, that the sons of the Natives of India who wish to enter into the service of their own country must come thousands of miles at great expense, and live apart from their families for years, before they are able to accomplish their object, and the result must have been that you would have established in some city in India the same mode of examination that you have established here. You must have been led to do that which would have enabled young men in India to offer themselves for the Civil Service of their country on as favourable terms as could be done in England. I am sure the noble Lord never had the slightest idea of the regulation having reference to this young man, or of injuring him; yet it has been done, and what has occurred leads to the conclusion that either somebody very deep in these matters has been at the bottom of this change, or that some combination of unfortunate circumstances has been at work, by which that which we have all so much at heart has been retarded. If the noble Lord had struck out this regulation, or made a new one, by which this young man could have had a chance of going home as a servant of the Civil Service, the fact would have been worth many regiments of soldiers in India.

In speaking on this subject I have nothing new to offer to the attention of the House. I have propounded the very same theories and remedies years ago. They are not my remedies and theories. I am not the inventor of local government for India; but the more I have considered the subject—the more I have discussed it with the Members of this House and with gentlemen connected with India—the more I am convinced that you will not make a single step towards the improvement of India unless you change your whole system of government—unless you give to each Presidency a government with more independent powers than are now possessed by it. What would be thought if the whole of Europe was under one governor, who knew only the language of the Feejee Islands, and that his subordinates were like himself, only more intelligent than the inhabitants of the Feejee Islands are supposed to be? You set a governor over 150,000,000 of human beings, in a climate where the European cannot do the work he has to do so well as here, where neither the moral nor physical strength of the individual is equal to what it is at home, —and you do not even always furnish the most powerful men for the office;—you seem to think that the atmosphere will be always calm and the sea always smooth. And so the government of India goes on; there are promises without number of beneficial changes, but we never hear that India is much better or worse than before. Now, that is not the way to do justice to a great

empire like India. If there had been a better government in India, the late disturbances among your own troops would not have happened; and I own I tremble when I reflect that every post may bring us, in the present temper of the European troops in India, some dire intelligence of acts which they may have committed, because they may think that this is a convenient opportunity for pressing some great claim of their own.

I beg the Committee to consider this matter, notwithstanding that the right hon. Gentleman is not disposed to take a gloomy view of the state of India. Look at your responsibilities. India is ruled by Englishmen, but remember that in that unfortunate country you have destroyed every form of government but your own; that you have cast the thrones of the Natives to the ground. Princely families, once the rulers of India, are now either houseless wanderers in the land they once called their own, or are pensioners on the bounty of those strangers by whom their fortunes have been overthrown. They who were noble and gentle for ages are now merged in the common mass of the people. All over those vast regions there are countless millions, helpless and defenceless, deprived of their natural leaders and their ancient chiefs, looking with only some small ray of hope to that omnipresent and irresistible Power by which they have been subjected. I appeal to you on behalf of that people. I have besought your mercy and your justice for many a year past; and if I speak to you earnestly now, it is because the object for which I plead is dear to my heart. Is it not possible to touch a chord in the hearts of Englishmen, to raise them to a sense of the miseries inflicted on that unhappy country by the crimes and the blunders of our rulers here? If you have steeled your hearts against the Natives, if nothing can stir you to sympathy with their miseries, at least have pity upon your own countrymen. Rely upon it the state of things which now exists in India must, before long, become most serious. I hope that you will not show to the world that, although your fathers conquered the country, you have not the ability to govern it. You had better disencumber yourselves of the fatal gift of empire than that the present generation should be punished for the sins of the past. I speak in condemnatory language, because I believe it to be deserved. I hope that no future historian will have to say that the arms of England in India were irresistible, and that an ancient empire fell before their victorious progress, — yet that finally India was avenged, because the power of her conqueror was broken by the intolerable burdens and evils which she cast upon her victim, and that this wrong was accomplished by a waste of human life and a waste of wealth which England, with all her power, was unable to bear.

INDIA.

V.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 19, 1861.

From Hansard.

[Mr. Dunlop brought forward a motion to inquire into the discrepancies between certain sets of documents, relating to the Affghan war of 1837–8. It appeared that some passages in the despatches of Sir Alexander Burnes had been mutilated, in order to make it appear that he advised a policy which he really condemned. Mr. Dunlop moved for a Committee to inquire into this alleged mutilation of despatches presented to the House. The motion was negatived.]

When the noble Lord rose, I observed, from his countenance and from his language, that he seemed to be suffering from the passion of anger. [Viscount Palmerston: 'Not much.'] 'Not much,' the noble Lord says. I admit that in the course of his speech he calmed down; but he was so far led from what I think was a fair course as to charge the hon. and learned Gentleman who introduced this Motion with making a violent and vituperative speech, and he spoke of 'that vocabulary of abuse of which the hon. Gentleman appeared to be master.' Now, I will undertake to say that I am only speaking the opinion of every Gentleman in the House who heard the speech which introduced this question, when I say that there has rarely been delivered here on any subject a speech more strictly logical, more judicially calm, and more admirable than that which we have heard to-night from the hon. and learned Member for Greenock. But the fact is the noble Lord felt himself hit.

The noble Lord is on his trial in this case; and on that account I expect that at the conclusion of the debate he will not feel himself at liberty to object to the appointment of this Committee. After a few sentences the noble Lord touched upon the case of Sir Alexander Burnes, and he made a very faint denial of the misrepresentations which are charged against the Government of that day in the case of that gentleman. But he went on to say that, after all, these things were of no importance; that what was in, or what was left out, was unimportant. But I should like to ask the noble Lord what was the object of the minute and ingenious, and I will say unmatched care which was taken in mutilating the despatches of a gentleman whose opinions were of no importance and whose writings could not make the slightest difference either to the question or to the opinions of any person concerned? The noble Lord, too, has stooped to conduct which, if I were not in this House, I might describe in language which I could not possibly use here without being told that I was transgressing the line usually observed in discussions in this assembly. The noble Lord has stooped so low as to

heap insult, throughout the whole of his speech, upon the memory of a man who died in the execution of what he believed to be his public duty—a duty which was thrust upon him by the mad and obstinate policy of the noble Lord; and whilst his blood cries to Heaven against that policy, the noble Lord, during a three-quarters of an hour's speech in this House, has scarcely ceased to heap insult on his memory.

What the noble Lord told us throughout his speech was that Sir Alexander Burnes was a man of the greatest simplicity of character. I could not, however complimentary I were disposed to be, retort that upon the noble Lord. He says that Sir Alexander Burnes—of whom he spoke throughout in the most contemptuous manner—an eminent political agent at the Court of Dost Mahommed, was beguiled by the treachery of that Asiatic ruler; that he took everything for truth which he heard, and that, in point of fact, he was utterly unfit for the position which he held at Cabul. But although the noble Lord had these despatches before him, and knew all the feelings of Sir Alexander Burnes, he still continued Sir Alexander Burnes there. He was there two years after these despatches were written, in that most perilous year when not only himself but the whole army—subjects of the Queen—fell victims to the policy of the noble Lord. Now, I must tell the noble Lord what my hon. and learned Friend, the Member for Greenock, did not discuss, and what the Committee is not to do—because every Member who heard the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Greenock, and those who listened to the speech of the noble Lord, must have seen that from the first the noble Lord evaded the whole question. He endeavoured to lead the House to believe that my hon. and learned Friend was going into some antiquarian researches about the policy of the English or the Indian Government twenty years ago, and that it was proposed to have a Committee to dig up all the particulars of our supposed peril from the designs of Russia at that time. But the fact is that my hon. and learned Friend had no such intention; and there was no man in the House more cognizant of that fact than the noble Lord when he ingeniously endeavoured to convey a contrary impression to the House.

It is not proposed to go into the policy of the war. And there is another question that it is not proposed to go into. It is not proposed to inquire whether Sir Alexander Burnes or Lord Auckland was Governor-General. We know that Lord Auckland was Governor-General; but we know that a Governor-General who may be many hundreds, or in India, perhaps, 2,000 miles away from the place where particular events are transpiring, must rely to a considerable extent on the information he receives from the political agent who is on the spot. If this be so, clearly what Sir Alexander Burnes thought, and what he said, and what he wrote, is of some importance. At least, if the House of Commons has any evidence placed before it, the noble Lord will agree that in a great question like this—I am not speaking of the present time, but of the time when these events happened—it is of first-rate importance that the House should have evidence not on one side only, but on both sides. There is another thing we do not propose to inquire into, and that is the policy of Russia at that time. I cannot very well understand the course which the noble Lord has taken on this point; for I find that about twelve months after the writing of these very despatches, the mutilation of which is now complained of, the noble Lord made a reply to the Russian Minister who had declared that there was nothing whatever hostile to England in the instructions which were furnished to Vicovich. He says—

'There has not existed the smallest design hostile to the English Government, nor the smallest idea of endangering the tranquillity of the British possessions in India.'

The noble Lord, in reply to that, on the

20th December, 1838, just a year after the writing of these despatches by Sir Alexander Burnes, said:—

'Her Majesty's Government accept as entirely satisfactory the declaration of the Russian Government that it does not harbour any designs hostile to the interests of Great Britain in India.'

I may leave that question there, because I can assure the noble Lord that my hon. and learned Friend has not the smallest intention—I judge so, at least, from his speech—of bringing anybody before the Committee to attack or defend the policy of the Government in the war which then unhappily took place. Nor do I suppose it is intended to arraign anybody for a policy that sacrificed at least 20,000 human lives—20,000 lives of the subjects of the Queen of England. Nor is it intended to inquire how far the loss of more than 15,000,000*l.* sterling by that policy has affected for all future time the finances and the circumstances of the Government of India. These are crimes—the whole of that policy is a crime—of a nature never to be answered for. No man can accurately measure it. No Committee of this House could adequately punish those who were the perpetrators of it. No, Sir, my hon. and learned Friend has not the slightest idea of going back twenty years for the purpose of bringing the noble Lord, or any one else who may be guilty of that great crime, to the bar of public opinion by this Committee.

But it is worth while that the House should know whether the Government in whom it placed confidence at that time, and in whom the Queen placed confidence—whether that Government was worthy of their confidence, and whether any members of the Government of that day are members of the Government at this day. It is worth while knowing whether there was and is a man in high position in the Government here or in India who had so low a sense of honour and of right that he could offer to this House mutilated, false, forged despatches and opinions of a public servant, who lost his life in the public service. Conceive any man at this moment in India engaged, as many have been during the last three years, in perilous services—conceive that any man should know that to-morrow, or next week, or any time this year, he may lay his bones in that distant land, and that six months afterwards there may be laid on the table of this House by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, or by the Secretary of State for India, letters or despatches of his from which passages have been cut out, and into which passages have been inserted, in which words have been so twisted as wholly to divert and distort his meaning, and to give to him a meaning, it may be, utterly the contrary to that which his original despatch intended to convey. I cannot conceive any anticipation more painful or more bitter, more likely to eat into the heart of any man engaged in the service of his country in a distant land.

It is admitted, and the noble Lord has not flatly denied it—he cannot deny it—he knows it as well as the hon. and learned member for Greenock—he knows it as well as the very man whose hand did the evil—he knows there have been garbling, mutilation, practically and essentially falsehood and forgery, in these despatches which have been laid before the House. Why was it refused to give the original despatches when they were asked for in 1842 by the hon. Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. H. Baillie), and when they were asked for at a later period by the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Hadfield)? Why was it that the originals were so consistently withheld? That they have been given now, I suppose is because those who were guilty of the outrage on the faith of Parliament thought, as twenty years had elapsed, that nobody would give himself the trouble to go into the question, and that no man would be so earnest as my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock in bringing the question before the notice of Parliament.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Hadfield) informs me that it was the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) who consented to the production of the original despatches when he was in office. I was not aware of that fact; but I am free here to tender him my thanks for the course which he took. I am sure he is the last man whom any one would suspect of being mixed up in any transaction of this kind, except with a view to give the House and the country full information with regard to it.' I say, then, avoiding all the long speech of the noble Lord, that the object of the Committee is to find out who did this evil thing - who placed upon the table of the House information which was knowingly false, and despatches that were actually forged—because if you add to or detract from, or so change a coin, or note, or deed, as to make any of them bear a meaning contrary to its original and intended meaning, of course you are guilty of such an act as I have described, and that is precisely what somebody has done in the despatches which we are now discussing. I say an odious offence has been committed against the House, and against the truth; and what we want to know is, who did it?

Now, will the noble Lord be candid enough—he does not think there is anything wrong—he says there is not much —it is very trifling—that Sir Alexander Burnes's opinions are not worth much—supposing it to be so—for the sake of argument, let me grant it; but if it is a matter of no importance, will the noble Lord be so candid as to tell us who did it? When Lord Broughton was examined before the Official Salaries Committee some years ago, he, as the noble Lord is aware, said that he took upon himself as President of the Board of Control at the time the entire responsibility of the Affghan war. The noble Lord now at the head of the Government was then a member of the India Board, and so I believe was the noble Lord the Member for the City of London. But the noble Lord at the head of the Government was also Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Now, I do not think I am wrong in supposing that this question lies between the noble Lord the Prime Minister and Lord Broughton, once a Member of this House. This thing was not done by some subordinate who cannot be found out.

My hon. and learned Friend says it has been done with marvellous care, and even with so much ability that it must have been done by a man of genius. Of course there are men of genius in very objectionable walks of life; but we know that the noble Lord at the head of the Government is a man of genius; if he had not been, he would not have sat on that bench for the last fifty years. And we know that Lord Broughton is a man of many and varied accomplishments. And once more I ask the noble Lord to tell us who did it? He knows who did it. Was it his own right-hand, or was it Lord Broughton's right-hand, or was it some clever secretary in the Foreign Office or in the India Office who did this work? I say the House has a right to know. We want to know that. We want to drag the delinquent before the public. This we want to know, because we wish to deter other Ministers from committing the like offence; and we want to know it for that which most of all is necessary—to vindicate the character and honour of Parliament. Nothing can sink Parliament to a lower state of degradation and baseness than that it should permit Ministers of the Crown to lay upon the table, upon questions involving the sacrifice of 20,000,000*l*. of money and 20,000 lives, documents which are not true—which slander our public servants, and which slander them most basely when they are dead and are not here to answer. I do not believe that the Gentlemen of England in this House —upon that side of the House or upon this—will ever consent to sit down with a case proved so clearly as this is without directing the omnipotent power and eye

of Parliament into the matter. I say, seeing the charge, seeing that the noble Lord was at the head of the Foreign Office at the time, that the policy of the Affghan war was always considered to be his, that the responsibility of this act must rest between him and Lord Broughton,—I should not like to hold the opinion, and I do not hold the opinion, that the noble Lord will object to a Committee to inquire into a matter in which he is himself so directly concerned.

CANADA.

I.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 13, 1865.

From Hansard.

[Delivered during the debate on Colonel Jervois' Report on the Defences of Canada.]

I AM not sure that I should have addressed the House on this occasion but for the observations which have been made by the noble Lord. I think he has been perhaps a little more frank in his declarations on this occasion, and in pointing out the real thing which I suspect is passing in his mind, and in the minds of very many Members of the House who have made no statement of their own opinions during this debate. I hope the debate will be useful, although I am obliged to say, while I admit the importance of the question that has been brought before us, that I think it is one of some delicacy. That it is important is clear, because it refers to the possibility of war between this country and the United States, and its delicacy arises from this—that it is very difficult to discuss this question without saying things which tend rather in the direction of war than in the direction of peace.

The difficulty which is now before us is this—that there is an extensive colony or dependency of this country lying adjacent to the United States, and if there be a war party in the United States—a party hostile to this country—that circumstance affords to it a very strong temptation to enter without much hesitation into a war with England, because it may feel that through Canada it can inflict a great humiliation upon this country. And at the same time it is perfectly well known to all intelligent men, especially to the statesmen and public men of the United States—it is as well known to them as it is to us—that there is no power whatever in this United Kingdom to defend successfully the territory of Canada against the power of the United States. Now we ought to know that, in order to put ourselves right upon this question, and that we may not talk folly and be called upon hereafter to act folly. The noble Lord at the head of the Government—or the Government, at any rate—is responsible for having compelled this discussion; because if a Vote is to be asked for during this Session—and it is only the beginning of other Votes—it is clearly the duty of the House to bring the subject under discussion. I think the Vote now is particularly inopportune for many reasons, but especially as we have heard from the Governor-General of Canada that they are about, in the North-American Provinces, to call into existence a new nationality; and I, for one, shall certainly object to the taxes of this country being heedlessly expended in behalf of any nationality but our own.

Now, what I should like to ask the House is this—first of all, will Canada

attack the States? Clearly not. Next, will the States attack Canada—I am keeping out of view England altogether? Clearly not. There is not a man in the United States, probably, whose voice or whose opinion would have the smallest influence in that country, who would recommend or desire that an attack should be made by the United States upon Canada with a view to its forcible annexation to the Union. There have been lately, as we know, dangers on the frontier. The Canadian people have been no wiser than some Members of this House—or than a great many men amongst the richer classes in this country. And when the refugees from the South—I am not speaking now of respectable and honourable men from the South, many of whom have left that country during these troubles, and for whom I feel the greatest commiseration, but I mean the ruffians from the South—who in large numbers have entered Canada and have employed themselves there in a course of policy likely to embroil us with the United States—I say that the people of Canada have treated these men with far too much consideration. They expressed very openly opinions hostile to the United States, whose power lay close to them.

I will not go into a detail of that which we are all sufficiently well acquainted with—the seizing of American ships on the Lakes, the raid into the State of Vermont, the robbing of a bank, the killing of a man in his own shop, the stealing of horses in open day, and another transaction of which we have very strong proof, that men of this class actually conspired to set fire to the largest cities of the Union. All these things have taken place and the Canadian Government made scarcely any sign. I believe that an application was made to the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office nearly a year ago, that he should stimulate the Canadian Government to some steps to avoid the dangers that have since arisen; but with that sort of negligence which has been so much seen here, nothing was done until the American Government and people, aroused by the nature of these transactions, showed that they were no longer about to put up with them. Then the Canadian Government and people took a little notice. Now, Lord Monck, the Governor-General of Canada—about whose appointment I have heard some people complain, saying that he was a mere follower of the noble Lord at the head of the Government, who lost his election and was therefore sent out to govern a province—Lord Monck, I am bound to say, from all I have heard from Canada, has conducted himself in a manner very serviceable to the colony, and with the greatest possible propriety as representing the Sovereign there. Lord Monck has been all along favourable to the United States, and I believe his Cabinet has also. I know that at least the most important newspaper there has always been favourable to the North. Still nothing was done; but the moment these troubles arose then everything was done. Volunteers have been sent to the frontier; the trial of the raiders has been proceeded with, and possibly they will be surrendered; and the Canadian Chancellor of the Exchequer has proposed a vote in their House of Parliament to restore to the persons at St. Albans, who were robbed by the raiders, the 50,000 dollars that were taken from them.

And what is the state of things now? There is the greatest possible calm on the frontier. The United States have not a word to say against Canada. The Canadian people have found that they were in the wrong and have now returned to their right mind. There is not a man in Canada at this moment, I believe, who has any idea that the United States Government has the smallest notion of attacking them, now or at any future time, on account of anything that has transpired between the United States and Canada during these trials. But if there comes a war in which Canada shall suffer and be made a victim, it will be a war got up between the Go-

vernment of Washington and the Government of London. And it becomes us to inquire whether that is at all probable. Is there anybody in this House in favour of such a war? I notice with great delight—and I was not a false prophet when I said some time ago that some day it would be so—I say I notice with delight the changed tone manifested here with regard to these American questions. Even the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Lord Robert Cecil) can speak without anger, and without any of that ill feeling which I am sorry to say on past occasions he has manifested in discussing these questions.

Now, I believe there are no men out of Bedlam—or at least who ought to be out of it—and I suspect there are very few men in Bedlam, who are in favour of our going to war with the United States. And in taking this view I am not arguing that it is because we see the vast naval and military power and apparently inexhaustible resources of that country. I will not assume that you or my countrymen have come to the conclusion that it is better for us not to make war with America, because you and they find her with a strength that you did not even suspect: I will say that it is upon higher grounds that we are all against a war with the United States. Our history for the last 200 years, and farther back, is a record of calamitous, and for the most part unnecessary wars. We have had enough of whatever a nation can gain by military successes and military glory. I will not turn to the disasters that might follow to our commerce nor to the wide-spread ruin that might be occasioned. I will say that we are a wiser and a better people than we were in these respects, and that we should regard a war with the United States as even a greater crime, if needlessly entered into, than war with almost any other country in the world.

Looking at our Government, we have preserved, with a good many blunders—one or two of which I shall comment upon by-and-by—neutrality during this great struggle. We have had it stated in this House, and we have had a Motion in this House, that the blockade was ineffective and ought to be broken. Men of various classes, some of them agents of the Richmond conspiracy—persons, it is said, of influence from France—all these are reported to have brought their influence to bear on the noble Lord at the head of the Government and his colleagues, with a view of inducing them to take part in this quarrel, and all this has failed to break our neutrality. Therefore, I should say, we may clearly come to the conclusion that England is not in favour of war; and if there should be any act of war, or any aggression whatever, out of which Canada will suffer, I believe honestly that it will not come from this country. That is a matter which gives me great satisfaction, and I believe the House will agree with me that I am not misstating the case.

Now let us ask, Is the United States for war? I know the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Lord Robert Cecil) has a lurking idea that there is some danger from that quarter; I am not at all certain that it does not prevail in other minds, and in many minds not so acute as that with which the noble Lord is gifted. If we had at the Bar of the House, Lord Russell as representing the English Government, and Mr. Adams as the representative of the Government of President Lincoln, and if we were to ask their opinion, they would tell us that which the Secretary for the Colonies has this night told us—that the relations between the two countries, so far as it is possible to discover them, are perfectly amicable; and I know from the communications between the Minister of the United States and our Minister for Foreign Affairs that they have been growing more and more amicable for many months past. Now, I take the liberty of expressing this opinion—that there has never been an administration in the United States since the time of the Revolutionary War, up to this hour, more entirely favourable to

peace with all foreign countries, and more especially favourable to peace with England, than the Government of which President Lincoln is the head. I will undertake to say that the most exact investigator of what has taken place will not be able to point to a single word he—President Lincoln—has said, or a single line he has written, or a single act he has done, since his first accession to power, that betrays anger against this country, or any of that vindictive feeling which some persons here may imagine to inflame the breasts of the President and his Cabinet.

Then if Canada is not for war, if England is not for war, and if the United States are not for war, whence is the war to come? That is what I should like to ask. I wish the noble Lord the Member for Stamford had been a little more frank. I should like to ask whence comes the anxiety, which undoubtedly to some extent prevails? It may be assumed even that the Government is not wholly free from it; for they have shown it in an almost ludicrous manner by proposing a vote of 50,000*l*. It is said the newspapers have got into a sort of panic. They can do that any night between the hours of six and twelve o'clock, when they write their articles. They are either very courageous or very panic-stricken.

It is said that 'the City' joins in this feeling. We know what 'the City' means—the right hon. Gentleman alluded to it to-night. It means that the people who deal in shares—though that does not describe the whole of them—'the moneyed interest' of the City, are alarmed. Well, I never knew the City to be right. Men who are deep in great monetary transactions, and who are steeped to the lips sometimes in perilous speculations, are not able to take broad and dispassionate views of political questions of this nature.

As to the newspapers, I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) when, referring to one of them in particular, he intimated that he thought its course was indicated by a wish to cover its own confusion. Surely, after four years' uninterrupted publication of lies with regard to America, I should think it has done pretty much to destroy its influence on foreign questions for ever.

But there is a much higher authority—that is the authority of the Peers. I do not know why we should be so much restricted with regard to the House of Lords in this House. I think I have observed that in their place they are not so squeamish as to what they say about us. It appeared to me that in this debate the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) felt it necessary to get up and endeavour to defend his chief. Now, if I were to give advice to the hon. Gentlemen opposite, it would be this—for while stating that during the last four years many noble Lords in the other House have said foolish things, I think I should be uncandid if I did not say that you also have said foolish things—learn from the example set you by the right hon. Gentleman. He, with a thoughtfulness and statesmanship which you do not all acknowledge, he did not say a word from that bench likely to create difficulty with the United States. I think his chief and his followers might learn something from his example.

But I have discovered one reason why in that other place mistakes of this nature are so often made. Not long ago there was a great panic raised, very much by what was said in another place about France. Now an attempt is made there to create a panic upon this question. In the hall of the Reform Club there is affixed to the wall a paper which gives a telegraphic account of what is being done in this House every night, and what is also being done in the other House, and I find almost every night from the beginning of the Session that the only words that have appeared on the side which is devoted to a record of the proceedings of the House of Lords are these, 'Lords adjourned.' The noble Lord at the head of the Government is responsible for much of this. He has brought this

House into nearly the same condition. We do very little, and they do absolutely nothing. All of us in our younger days, I am quite sure, were taught by those who had the care of us a verse which was intended to inculcate the virtue of industry. One couplet was to this effect—

> 'Satan still some mischief finds
> For idle hands to do.'

And I do not believe that men, however high in station, are exempt from that unfortunate effect which arises to all of us from a course of continued idleness. But I should like to ask this House in a most serious mood, what is the reason that any man in this country has now more anxiety with regard to the preservation of peace with the United States than he had a few years ago? Is there not a consciousness in our heart of hearts that we have not during the last five years behaved generously to our neighbours? Do not we feel in some sort a pricking of conscience, and are we not sensible that conscience tends to make us cowards at this particular juncture?

I shall not review the past transactions with anger, but with feelings of sorrow; for I maintain, and I think history will bear out what I say, that there is no generous and high-minded Englishman who can look back upon the transactions of the last four years without a feeling of sorrow at the course we have pursued on some important occasions. As I am wishful to speak with a view to a better state of feeling, both in this country and in the United States, I shall take the liberty, if the House will permit me for a few minutes, to refer to two or three of these transactions, where, I think, though perhaps we were not in the main greatly wrong, yet in some circumstances we were so far unfortunate as to have created an irritation which at this moment we wish did not exist. The hon. Member for Horsham (Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald) referred to the course taken by the Government with regard to the acknowledgment of the belligerent rights of the South. Now I have never been one to condemn the Government for acknowledging those belligerent rights, except upon this ground—I think it might be logically contended that it might possibly have become necessary to take that step—but I do think the time and manner in which it was done were most unfortunate, and could not but produce very evil effects.

Going back nearly four years, we recollect what occurred when the news arrived of the first shot having been fired at Fort Sumter. That, I think, was about the 12th of April. Immediately after that time it was announced that a new Minister was coming to this country. Mr. Dallas had intimated to the Government that as he did not represent the new President he would rather not undertake anything of importance; but that his successor was on his way and would arrive on such a day. When a man leaves New York on a given day you can calculate to about twelve hours when he will be in London. Mr. Adams, I think, arrived in London about the 13th of May, and when he opened his newspaper next morning he found the Proclamation of neutrality, acknowledging the belligerent rights of the South. I say that the proper course to have taken would have been to have waited till Mr. Adams arrived here, and to have discussed the matter with him in a friendly manner, explaining the ground upon which the English Government had felt themselves bound to issue that Proclamation, and representing that it was not done in any manner as an unfriendly act towards the United States Government. But no precaution whatever was taken; it was done with unfriendly haste; and it had this effect, that it gave comfort and courage to the conspiracy at Montgomery and at Richmond, and caused great grief and irritation amongst that portion of the people of America who were most strongly desirous of maintaining friendly relations between their country and England.

To illustrate this point allow me to suppose a great revolt had taken place in Ireland, and that we had sent over within a fortnight of the occurrence of such an unfortunate event a new Minister to Washington, and that on the morning after arriving there he had found, that without consulting him, the Government had taken a hasty step by which the belligerent rights of the insurgents had been acknowledged, and by which comfort and support had been given them. I ask any man whether, under such circumstances, the feeling throughout the whole of Great Britain, and in the mind of every man anxious to preserve the unity of Great Britain and Ireland, would not necessarily be one of irritation and exasperation against the United States?

I will not argue this matter further—to do so would be simply to depreciate the intellect of the hon. Gentlemen listening to me. Seven or eight months afterwards there happened another transaction of a very different but unfortunate nature—that is the transaction arising out of the seizure of two Southern envoys on board an English ship—the *Trent*. I recollect making a speech down at Rochdale about the time of that occurrence. It was a speech entirely in favour of the United States Government and people—but I did not then undertake, as I do not undertake now, in the slightest degree to defend the seizure of those two envoys. I said that although precedents for such an action might possibly be found to have occurred in what I will call some of the evil days in our history, at any rate it was opposed to the maxims and principles of the United States Government, and was, as I thought, a bad act—an act which should not have been done. Well, I do not complain of the demand that those men should be given up; but I do complain of the manner in which that demand was made, and the menaces by which it was accompanied. I think it was wrong and unstatesman-like that at the moment we heard of the seizure, when there was not the least foundation for supposing that the United States Government were aware of the act, or had in the slightest degree sanctioned it, as we since well know they did not, that we should immediately get ships ready, and send off troops, and incite the organs of the press—who are always too ready to inflame the passions of the people to frenzy—to prepare their minds for war.

But that was not all; because before the United States had heard a word of the matter from this country their Secretary of State had written to Mr. Adams a despatch, which was communicated to our Government, and in which it was stated that the transaction had not taken place by any orders of theirs, and that therefore, as far as they and we were concerned, it was a pure accident, which they should consider with the most friendly disposition towards this country. How came it that this despatch was never published for the information of the people of this country? How happened it that during one whole month the flame of war was fanned by the newspapers, particularly by those supposed to be devoted to the Government, and that one of those newspapers, supposed to be peculiarly devoted to the Prime Minister, had the audacity—I do not know whence it obtained its instructions—to deny that any such despatch had been received? Now, Sir, I am of opinion that it is not possible to maintain amicable relations with any great country—I think it is not possible to do so with any little one—unless Governments will manage these transactions in what I will call a more courteous and more honourable manner. I happen to know—for I received a letter from the United States, from one of the most eminent men in that country, dated only two days before those men were given up, in which the writer said—that the real difficulty in the course of the President was that the menaces of the English Government had made it almost impossible for them to concede; and that the question they asked themselves was whether the Eng-

lish Government was intending to seek a cause of quarrel or not. And I am sure the noble Lord at the head of the Government, if such a demand had been made upon him with courtesy and fairness, as should be between friendly nations, would have been more disposed to concede, and would have found it much more easy to concede, than if the demand had been accompanied by menaces such as his Government offered to the Government of the United States. Now the House will observe that I am not condemning the Government of this country on the main point of what they did. I am only condemning them because they did not do what they had to do in that manner which would be most likely to remove difficulties and preserve a friendly feeling between the two nations.

Then I come to the last thing I shall mention—to the question of the ships which have been preying upon the commerce of the United States. I shall confine myself to that one vessel, the *Alabama*. She was built in this country; all her munitions of war were from this country; almost every man on board her was a subject of Her Majesty. She sailed from one of our chief ports. She is known to have been built by a firm in which a Member of this House was, and I presume is, interested. Now, Sir, I do not complain—I know that once, when I referred to this question two years ago, when my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford brought it forward in this House, the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Laird) was excessively angry—I do not complain that the Member for Birkenhead has struck up a friendship with Captain Semmes, who may probably be described, as another sailor once was of similar pursuits, as being 'the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship.' Therefore, I do not complain of a man who has an acquaintance with that notorious person, and I do not complain, and did not then, that the Member for Birkenhead looks admiringly upon the greatest example which men have ever seen of the greatest crime which men have ever committed. I do not complain even that he should applaud that which is founded upon a gigantic traffic in living flesh and blood—a traffic into which no subject of this realm can enter without being deemed a felon in the eyes of our law and punished as such. But what I do complain of is this, that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birkenhead, a magistrate of a county, a deputy-lieutenant—whatever that may be—a representative of a constituency, and having a seat in this ancient and honourable Assembly—that he should, as I believe he did, if concerned in the building of this ship, break the law of his country, by driving us into an infraction of International Law, and treating with undeserved disrespect the Proclamation of neutrality of the Queen.

I have another complaint to make, and in allusion to that hon. Member. It is within your recollection that when on a former occasion he made that speech and defended his course, he declared that he would rather be the builder of a dozen *Alabamas* than do something which nobody has done. That language was received with repeated cheering from the Opposition side of the House. Well, Sir, I undertake to say that that was at least a most unfortunate circumstance, and I beg to tell the hon. Gentleman that at the end of last Session, when the great debate took place on the question of Denmark, there were many men on this side of the House who had no objection whatever to see the present Government turned out of office, for they had many grounds of complaint against them, but they felt it impossible that they should take the responsibility of bringing into office the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire or the party who could utter such cheers on such a subject as that.

Turning from the Member for Birkenhead to the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office, he, who in the case of the acknowledgment of belligerent rights had proceeded with such remarkable celerity, such undue and unfriendly haste, amply compensated for it when

he came to the question of the *Alabama*, by his slowness of procedure. And this is a strange circumstance, which even the noble Lord's Colleagues have never been able to explain, that although he sent orders to Cork to stop the *Alabama* if she arrived there, he allowed her afterwards, when she had gone out of the jurisdiction of the Crown in these islands, to go into a dozen or a score of ports belonging to this country in different parts of the world. It seems to me that this is rather a special instance of that feebleness of purpose and of action on the part of the noble Lord which I regret to say has on many occasions done much to mar what would otherwise be a great political career. I will not detain the House on the question of the rams. The hon. Member for Birkenhead, or the firm or the family, or whoever the people are at Birkenhead who do these things, this firm at Birkenhead, after they had seen the peril into which the country was drifting on account of the *Alabama*, proceeded most audaciously to build those two rams; and it was only at the very last moment, when on the eve of a war with the United States on account of those rams, that the Government happily had the courage to seize them, and thus the last danger was averted.

I suppose there are some shipowners here. I know there are many in London—there are many in Liverpool—what would be the feeling in this country if they suffered in this way from ships built in the United States? There is a shipowner in New York, Mr. Lowe, a member of the Chamber of Commerce of New York. He had three large ships destroyed by the *Alabama*; and the *George Griswold*, which came to this country freighted with a heavy cargo of provisions of various kinds for the suffering people of Lancashire, was destroyed on her return passage, and the ship that destroyed it may have been, and I believe was, built by these patriotic shipbuilders of Birkenhead. These are things that must rankle in the breast of a country which is subjected to such losses and indignities. Even to-day I see in the newspapers that a vessel that went out from this country has destroyed ten or eleven ships between the Cape of Good Hope and Australia. I have thought it unnecessary to bring continually American questions before the House, as some Gentlemen have done during the last two or three Sessions. They should have asked a few questions in regard to these ships; but no, they asked no question upon these points. They asked questions upon every point on which they thought they might embarrass the Government and make the great difficulties of the Government greater in all their transactions with the United States.

But the Members of the Government have not been wise. I hope it will not be thought that I am unnecessarily critical if I say that Governments are not generally very wise. Two years ago the noble Lord at the head of the Government and the Attorney-General addressed the House. I asked the noble Lord—I do not often ask him for anything—to speak, if only for five minutes, words of generosity and sympathy to the Government and people of the United States. He did not do it. Perhaps I was foolish to expect it. The Attorney-General made a most able speech. It was the only time that I have listened to him, ever since I have known him in this House, with pain, for I thought his speech was full of bad morals and bad law. I am quite certain that he even gave an account of the facts of the case which was not as ingenuous and fair as the House had a right to expect from him. Next Session the noble Lord and the Attorney-General turned quite round. They had a different story about the same transaction, and gradually, as the aspect of things has changed on the other side of the Atlantic, there has been a gradual return to good sense and fairness, not only on the part of Members upon the Treasury Bench, but on that of other Members of the House.

Now, Sir, I would not willingly say a word that would wound either the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because I do not know amongst the official statesmen of this country two men for whom I have greater sympathy or more respect; but I have to complain of them. I do not know why it is that they both go down to Newcastle—a town in which I feel a great interest—and there give forth words of offence and unwisdom. I know that what the noble Lord said was all very smart, but really it was not true, and I have not much respect for a thing that is merely smart and is not true. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a statement too. The papers made it appear that he did it with exultation; but that is a mistake. But he made a statement, and though I do not know what will be in his Budget, I know his wishes in regard to that statement—namely, that he had never made it.

Those Gentlemen, bear in mind, sit, as it were, on a hill; they are not obscure men, making speeches in a public-house or even at a respectable mechanics' institution; they are men whose voice is heard wherever the English language is known. And knowing that, and knowing what effect their speeches will have, especially in Lancashire, where men are in trade, and where profits and losses are affected by the words of statesmen, they use the language of which I complain; and beyond this, for I can conceive some idea of the irritation those statements must have caused in the United States. I might refer to the indiscriminating abuse of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Sheffield; and I may add to that the unsleeping ill-will of the noble Lord the Member for Stamford. I am not sure that these two Members of the House are in the least degree converted yet. I think I heard the hon. Member for Sheffield utter tonight some ejaculation that looked as if he retained all his old sentiments. [Mr. Roebuck: 'Exactly.'] I am sorry it is so. I did expect that these things would be regretted and repented of; and I must express my hope that if any one of you who have been thus ungenerous shall ever fall into trouble of any kind, that you will find your friends more kind and more just than you have been to your fellow-countrymen—for I will still call them so—at the other side of the Atlantic. And as to the press, Sir, I think it is unnecessary to say much about that, because every night those unfortunate writers are now endeavouring to back out of everything they have been saying; and I can only hope that their power for evil in future will be greatly lessened by the stupendous exhibition of ignorance and folly which they have made to the world.

Now, Sir, having made this statement, I suppose the noble Lord the Member for Stamford, if he were to get up after me, would say: 'Well, if all this be true—if we have done all these injurious things, if we have created all this irritation in the United States—will it not be likely that this irritation will provoke a desire for vengeance, and that the chances of war are greatly increased by it?' I do not know whether the chances of war are increased, but I will say that not only is war not certain, but it is to the last degree improbable.

But, Sir, there is another side to this question. All England is not included in the rather general condemnation which I have thought it my duty to express. There is another side. Looking to our own population, what have the millions been saying and doing—the millions you are so much afraid of?—especially the noble Lord the Member for Stamford, who objects to the transference of power to those millions from those who now hold it, and, from his position, naturally objects. I beg leave to tell the House that, taking the counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire—your great counties of population—the millions of men there, whose industry has not only created but sustains the fabric of your national power, have had no

kind of sympathy with the views which I have been condemning. They have been more generous and more wise; they have shown that magnanimity and love of freedom are not extinct. And, speaking of the county from which I come—the county of many sorrows, whose griefs have hung like a dark cloud over almost every heart during the last three years—all the attempts which the agents of the Confederacy have made there by money, by printing, by platform speeches, by agitation, have utterly failed to get from that population one expression of sympathy with the American insurrection. And, Sir, if the bond of union and friendship between England and America shall remain unbroken, we shall not have to thank the wealthy and the cultivated, but those laborious millions whom statesmen and histories too frequently take little account of. They know a little of the United States, which Gentlemen opposite and some on this side the House do not appear to know. They know that every man of them would be better off on the American continent, if he chose to go there, and would be welcome to every right and privilege that the people there are in possession of. They know further that every man may have from the United States Government a free gift of 160 acres of the most fertile land in the world. [A laugh.] I do not understand that laugh, but the gift, under the Homestead Act of America, of 160 acres of land is a great deal for a man who has no land. I can tell you that the Homestead Act and the liberality of the American Government have had a great effect upon the population of the North of England, and I can tell you further—that the labouring population of this country—the artisans and the mechanics—will never join heartily in any policy which is intended to estrange the people of the United States from the people of the United Kingdom.

But, Sir, we have other securities for peace which are not less than these, and I find them in the character of the Government and people of the American Union. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) referred to what must reasonably be supposed to happen in case this rebellion should be put down—that when a nation is exhausted it will not rush rashly into a new struggle. The loss of life has been great, the loss of treasure enormous. Happily for them, this life and this treasure have not been sacrificed to keep a Bourbon on the throne of France, or to keep the Turks in Europe; the sacrifice was for an object which every man could comprehend, which every man could examine by the light of his own intelligence and his own conscience; for if these men have given their lives and their possessions, it was for the attainment of a great end, the maintenance of the unity and integrity of a great country. History in future time must be written in a different spirit from all history in the past, if it should express any condemnation of that people. Mr. Lincoln, who is now for the second time President of the United States, was elected exclusively by what was termed the Republican party. He is now elected by what may be called the Great Union party of the nation. But Mr. Lincoln's party has always been for peace. That party in the North has never carried on any war of aggression, and has never desired one. I speak of the North only, the Free States. And let the House remember that in that country landed property, property of all kind, is more universally distributed than in any other nation, that instruction and school education are also more widely diffused there than amongst any other people. I say, they have never carried on hitherto a war for aggrandizement or for vengeance, and I believe they will not begin one now.

Canada, I think the noble Lord will admit, is a very tempting bait, not indeed for the purpose of annexation, but for the purpose of humiliating this country. I agree with hon. Gentlemen who have said that it would be discreditable

to England, in the light of her past history, that she should leave any portion of her Empire which she could defend, undefended. But still it is admitted—and I think the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) produced a great effect upon those who heard it—the House admitted that in case of war with the United States, Canada could not be defended by any power on land or at sea which this country could raise or spare for that purpose. I am very sorry, not that we cannot defend Canada, but that any portion of the dominions of the British Crown is in such circumstances as to tempt evil-disposed people to attack it with the view of humiliating us, because I believe that transactions which humiliate a Government and a nation are not only disagreeable, but a great national harm.

But, now, is there a war party in the United States? I believe there is such a party. It is that party which was a war party eighty years ago. It is the party represented by hon. Gentlemen who sit on that bench—the Irish party. They who are hostile to this country in the United States are those who were recently malcontent subjects of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth. It is these, and such as these, to whom the noble Lord at the head of the Government offers only such consolation as that of telling them that 'the rights of the tenants are the wrongs of the landlords,' who constitute the only war party in the United States; and it was the war party there in the days of Lord North. But the real power of the United States does not rest on that class. American mobs—and, excepting some portion of the population of New York, I would not apply the language even to them—for the sake of forcing their Congress and their Executive to a particular course, are altogether unknown. The real mob in your sense, is that party of chivalrous gentlemen in the South, who have received, I am sorry to say, so much sympathy from some persons in this country and in this House. But the real power depends upon another class —the landowners throughout the country, and there are millions of them. In this last election for President of the United States, I was told by a citizen of New York, who was most active in the election, that in the State of New York alone 100,000 Irish votes were given, as he expressed it, solidly—that is, in one mass—for General M'Clellan, and that not more than 2,000 were given for President Lincoln. You see the preponderance of that party in the city of New York, and that is the feeling amongst them throughout the State of New York; but, throughout the whole of the United States, it is merely a small per-centage, which has no sensible effect upon the constitution of Congress, or upon legislation or government.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) referred to a point which I suppose has really been the cause of this debate, and that is the temper of the United States in making certain demands upon our Government. I asked a question the other night after the noble Lord had asked a question upon the subject — I asked whether we had not claims against them. I understand that claims were made upon us by the United States amounting to 300,000*l*. or 400,000*l*. I am afraid that we have claims against them, amounting probably to as much as that. If any man thinks he has a right to go to law with another, and that other has an answer to his claim, the case must be heard. And so between two great nations and two free Governments. If one has claims against the other, and the other has counter claims, clearly nothing can be more fair than that those claims should be courteously and honestly considered. It is quite absurd to suppose that the English Government and the Government at Washington can have a question about half a million of money which they cannot amicably settle. The noble Lord, I believe, thinks it is not a question for arbitration, but that it is a

question of principle. Well, all questions of property almost are questions of law, and you go to a lawyer and settle them if you can. In this case it would be surely as easy to have the matter settled by some impartial person as it was to ask the Senate or other authority at Hamburg to settle a question between this country and the Empire of Brazil. Our most perfect security is, that as the war in America draws to a close—if it should happily soon draw to a close—we shall become more generous to them, and their Government and people will probably become less irritated against us. And when the passions have cooled down, I am quite sure that Mr. Seward on that side and Earl Russell on this, Mr. Adams here and Sir Frederick Bruce there, will be able, without much difficulty, to settle this, which is, after all, an unimportant matter, as a question of accounts between the two nations.

I have only one more observation to make, and it is this—I suspect the root of all the unfortunate circumstances that have occurred is the feeling of jealousy which we have cherished with regard to the American nation. It was very much shown at the beginning of this war, when a Member whom I will not name, for I am sure his wish is that his name should not be mentioned in connection with it now, spoke of the bursting of the bubble republic. I recollect that Lord John Russell, as he then was, speaking from that bench, turned round and rebuked him in language which was worthy of his name, and character, and position. I beg to tell that Gentleman, and anybody else who talks about a bubble republic, that I have a strong suspicion he will see that a great many bubbles will burst before that. Why should we fear a great nation on the American continent? Some people fear that, should America become a great nation, she will be arrogant and aggressive. It does not follow that it should be so. The character of a nation does not depend altogether upon its size, but upon the instruction, the civilization, and the morals of its people. You fancy the supremacy of the sea will pass away from you; and the noble Lord, who has had much experience, and is supposed to be wiser on the subject than any other man in the House, will say that 'Rule Britannia' may become obsolete. Well, inasmuch as the supremacy of the seas means arrogance and the assumption of a dictatorial power on the part of this country, the sooner that becomes obsolete the better. I do not believe that it is for the advantage of this country, or of any country in the world, that any one nation should pride itself upon what is termed the supremacy of the sea; and I hope the time is coming—I believe the hour is hastening—when we shall find that law and justice will guide the councils and will direct the policy of the Christian nations of the world. Nature will not be baffled because we are jealous of the United States—the decrees of Providence will not be overthrown by aught we can do.

The population of the United States is now not less than 35,000,000. When the next Parliament of England has lived to the age which this has lived to, that population will be 40,000,000, and you may calculate the increase at the rate of rather more than 1,000,000 of persons per year. Who is to gainsay it? Will constant snarling at a great republic alter this state of things, or swell us up in these islands to 40,000,000 or 50,000,000, or bring them down to our 30,000,000? Hon. Members and the country at large should consider these facts, and learn from them that it is the interest of the nations to be at one—and for us to be in perfect courtesy and amity with the great English nation on the other side of the Atlantic. I am sure that the longer that nation exists the less will our people be disposed to sustain you in any needless hostility against them or jealousy of them. And I am the more convinced of this from what I have seen of the conduct of the people in the north of England during the last four years. I believe, on the

other hand, that the American people, when this excitement is over, will be willing, so far as aggressive acts against us are concerned, to bury in oblivion transactions which have given them much pain, and that they will make the allowance which they may fairly make, that the people of this country—even those high in rank and distinguished in culture—have had a very inadequate knowledge of the real state of the events which have taken place in that country since the beginning of the war.

It is on record that when the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was about to begin his great work, David Hume wrote a letter to him urging him not to employ the French but the English tongue, 'because,' he said, 'our establishments in America promise superior stability and duration to the English language.' How far that promise has been in part fulfilled we who are living now can see; but how far it will be more largely and more completely fulfilled in after times we must leave after times to tell. I believe that in the centuries which are to come it will be the greatest pride and the highest renown of England, that from her loins have sprung a hundred millions—it may be two hundred millions—of men who dwell and prosper on that continent which the grand old Genoese gave to Europe. Sir, if the sentiments which I have uttered shall become the sentiments of the Parliament and people of the United Kingdom—if the moderation which I have described shall mark the course of the Government and of the people of the United States—then, notwithstanding some present irritation and some present distrust—and I have faith both in us and in them—I believe that these two great commonwealths will march abreast, the parents and the guardians of freedom and justice, wheresoever their language shall be spoken and their power shall extend.

CANADA.

II.

THE CANADIAN FORTIFICATIONS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 23, 1865.

I shall ask the attention of the House for only a few moments. If the hon. Member (Mr. Bentinck) divides, I shall go into the same lobby with him. I am afraid that, in making that announcement, I shall excite some little alarm in the mind of the hon. Gentleman. I wish therefore to say, that I shall not in going into the lobby agree with him in many of the statements he has made. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) said, that he approached the military question with great diffidence, and I was very glad to see any signs of diffidence in that quarter. After that explanation, he asked the House with a triumphant air whether there is any difficulty in defending a frontier of one thousand or fifteen hundred miles, and whether the practicability of doing so is a new doctrine in warfare. But one thousand or fifteen hundred miles of frontier to defend at the centre of your power, is one thing; but at three thousand or four thousand miles from the centre, it is an entirely different thing. I venture to say, that there is not a man in this House, or a sensible man out of it, who, apart from the consideration of this vote, or some special circumstances attending it, believes that the people of this country could attempt a successful defence of the frontier of Canada against the whole power of the United States. I said the other night, that I hoped we should not now talk folly, and hereafter, in the endeavour to be consistent, act folly. We all know perfectly well that we are talking folly when we say that the Government of this country would send either ships or men to make an effectual defence of Canada against the power of the United States, supposing war to break out. Understand, I am not in the least a believer in the probability of war, but I will discuss the question for one moment as if war were possible. I suppose some men in this House think it probable. But if it be possible or probable, and if you have to look this difficulty in the face, there is no extrication from it but in the neutrality or independence of Canada.

I agree with those Members who say that it is the duty of a great empire to defend every portion of it. I admit that as a general proposition, though hon. Gentlemen opposite, and some on this side, do not apply that rule to the United States. But, admitting that rule, and supposing that we are at all points unprepared for such a catastrophe, may we not, as reasonable men, look ahead,

and try if it be not possible to escape from it? [An hon. Member: 'Run away?'] No, not by running away, though there are many circumstances in which brave men run away; and you may get into difficulty on this Canadian question, which may make you look back and wish that you had run away a good time ago. I object to this vote on a ground which, I believe, has not been raised by any Member in the present discussion. I am not going to say that the expenditure of fifty thousand pounds is a matter of great consequence to this country, that the expenditure of this money in the proposed way will be taken as a menace by the United States. I do not think that this can be fairly said; for whether building fortifications at Quebec be useless or not, such a proceeding is not likely to enable the Canadians to overrun the State of New York. The United States, I think, will have no right to complain of this expenditure. The utmost it can do will be to show them that some persons, and perhaps the Government of this country, have some little distrust of them, and so far it may do injury. I complain of the expenditure and the policy announced by the Colonial Secretary, on a ground which I thought ought to have been urged by the noble Lord the Member for Wick, who is a sort of half-Canadian. He made a speech which I listened to with great pleasure, and told the House what some of us, perhaps, did not know before; but if I had been connected, as he is, with Canada, I would have addressed the House from a Canadian point of view.

What is it that the Member for Oxford says? He states, in reference to the expenditure for the proposed fortifications, that, though a portion of the expenditure is to be borne by us, the main portion is to be borne by Canada; but I venture to tell him, that, if there shall be any occasion to defend Canada at all, it will not arise from anything Canada does, but from what England does; and therefore I protest against the doctrine that the Cabinet in London may get into difficulties, and ultimately into war, with the Cabinet at Washington; that because Canada lies adjacent to the United States, and may consequently become a great battle-field, this United Kingdom has a right to call on Canada for the main portion of that expenditure. Who has asked you to spend fifty thousand pounds, and the hundreds of thousands which may be supposed to follow, but which perhaps Parliament may be indisposed hereafter to grant? What is the proportion which Canada is to bear? If we are to spend two hundred thousand pounds at Quebec, is Canada to spend four hundred thousand pounds at Montreal? If Canada is to spend double whatever we may spend, is it not obvious that every Canadian will ask himself—what is the advantage of the connection between Canada and England?

Every Canadian knows perfectly well, and nobody better than the noble Lord the Member for Wick, that there is no more prospect of a war between Canada and the United States alone, than between the Empire of France and the Isle of Man. If that is so, why should the Canadians be taxed beyond all reason, as the Colonial Secretary proposes to tax them, for a policy not Canadian, and for a calamity which, if ever it occurs, must occur from some transactions between England and the United States? There are Gentlemen here who know a good deal of Canada, and I see behind me one who knows perfectly well what is the condition of the Canadian finances. We complain that Canada levies higher duties on British manufactures than the United States did before the present war, and much higher than France does. But when we complain to Canada of this, and say it is very unpleasant usage from a part of our empire, the Canadians reply that their expenditure is so much, and their debt, with the interest on it, so much, that they are obliged to levy these heavy duties. If the Canadian finances are in

the unfortunate position described; if the credit of Canada is not very good in the market of this country; if you see what are the difficulties of the Canadians during a period of peace; consider what will be their difficulties if the doctrine of the Colonial Secretary be carried out, which is that whatever expenditure is necessary for the defence of Canada, though we bear a portion, the main part must be borne by Canada.

We must then come to this inevitable conclusion. Every Canadian will say, 'We are close alongside of a great nation; our parent state is three thousand miles away; there are litigious, and there may be even warlike, people in both nations, and they may occasion the calamity of a great war; we are peaceable people, having no foreign politics, happily; we may be involved in war, and while the cities of Great Britain are not touched by a single shell, nor one of its fields ravaged, there is not a city or a village in this Canada in which we live which will not be liable to the ravages of war on the part of our powerful neighbour.' Therefore the Canadians will say, unless they are unlike all other Englishmen (who appear to have more sense the farther they go from their own country), that it would be better for Canada to be disentangled from the politics of England, and to assume the position of an independent state.

I suspect from what has been stated by official Gentlemen in the present Government and in previous Governments, that there is no objection to the independence of Canada whenever Canada may wish it. I have been glad to hear those statements, because I think they mark an extraordinary progress in sound opinions in this country. I recollect the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office on one occasion being very angry with me, he said I wished to make a great empire less; but a great empire, territorially, may be lessened without its power and authority in the world being diminished. I believe if Canada now, by a friendly separation from this country, became an independent state, choosing its own form of government—monarchical, if it liked a monarchy, or republican, if it preferred a republic—it would not be less friendly to England, and its tariff would not be more adverse to our manufactures than it is now. In the case of a war with America, Canada would then be a neutral country; and the population would be in a state of greater security. Not that I think there is any fear of war, but the Government admit that it may occur by their attempt to obtain money for these fortifications. I object, therefore, to this vote, not on that account, nor even because it causes some distrust, or may cause it, in the United States; but I object to it mainly because I think we are commencing a policy which we shall either have to abandon, because Canada will not submit to it, or else which will bring upon Canada a burden in the shape of fortification expenditure that will make her more and more dissatisfied with this country, and that will lead rapidly to her separation from us. I do not object to that separation in the least; I believe it would be better for us and better for her. But I think that, of all the misfortunes which could happen between us and Canada, this would be the greatest, that her separation should take place after a period of irritation and estrangement, and that we should have on that continent to meet another element in some degree hostile to this country.

I am sorry, Sir, that the noble Lord at the head of the Government, and his colleagues, have taken this course; but it appears to me to be wonderfully like almost everything which the Government does. It is a Government apparently of two parts, the one part pulling one way and the other part pulling another, and the result generally is something which does not please anybody, or produce any good effect in any direction. They now propose a scheme which has just enough in it to create distrust and irritation, enough to make it in some degree injurious, and they do not do enough to accomplish any of the objects for which

according to their statements, the proposition is made. Somebody asked the other night whether the Administration was to rule, or the House of Commons. Well, I suspect from the course of the debates, that on this occasion the Administration will be allowed to rule. We are accustomed to say that the Government suggests a thing on its own responsibility, and therefore we will allow them to do it. But the fact is, that the Government knows no more of this matter than any other dozen gentlemen in this House. They are not a bit more competent to form an opinion upon it. They throw it down on the table, and ask us to discuss and vote it.

I should be happy to find the House, disregarding all the intimations that war is likely, anxious not to urge Canada into incurring an expenditure which she will not bear, and which, if she will not bear, must end in one of two things—either in throwing the whole burden upon us, or in breaking up, perhaps suddenly and in anger, the connection between us and that colony, and in making our future relations with her most unsatisfactory. I do not place much reliance on the speech of the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, not because he cannot judge of the question just as well as I or any one of us can do, but because I notice that in matters of this kind Gentlemen on that (the Opposition) bench, whatever may have been their animosities towards the Gentlemen on this (the Treasury) bench on other questions, shake hands. They may tell you that they have no connection with the House over the way, but the fact is, their connection is most intimate. And if the right honourable Member for Buckinghamshire were now sitting on the Treasury bench, and the noble Viscount were sitting opposite to him, the noble Viscount, I have no doubt, would give him the very same support that he now receives from the right hon. Gentleman.

This seems to me a question so plain, so much on the surface, appealing so much to our common sense, having in it such great issues for the future, that I am persuaded it is the duty of the House of Commons on this occasion to take the matter out of the hands of the executive Government, and to determine that, with regard to the future policy of Canada, we will not ourselves expend the money of the English tax-payers, and not force upon the tax-payers of Canada a burden which, I am satisfied, they will not long continue to bear.

CANADA.

III.

THE CANADIAN CONFEDERATION SCHEME.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 28, 1867.

Although this measure has not excited much interest in the House or in the country, yet it appears to me to be of such very great importance that it should be treated rather differently, or that the House should be treated rather differently in respect to it. I have never before known of any great measure affecting any large portion of the empire or its population which has been brought in and attempted to be hurried through Parliament in the manner in which this bill is being dealt with. But the importance of it is much greater to the inhabitants of those provinces than it is to us. It is on that account alone that it might be expected we should examine it closely, and see that we commit no error in passing it.

The right hon. Gentleman has not offered us, on one point, an explanation which I think he will be bound to make. This bill does not include the whole of the British North American Provinces. I presume the two left out have been left out because it is quite clear they did not wish to come in. [Mr. Adderley: 'I am glad I can inform the hon. Gentleman that they are, one of them at least, on the point of coming in.'] Yes; the reason of their being left out is because they were not willing to come in. They may hereafter become willing, and if so the bill will admit them by a provision which appears reasonable. But the province of Nova Scotia is also unwilling to come in, and it is assumed that because some time ago the Legislature of that province voted a resolution partly in favour of some such course, therefore the population is in favour of it.

For my part, I do not believe in the propriety or wisdom of the Legislature voting on a great question of this nature with reference to the Legislature of Nova Scotia, if the people of Nova Scotia have never had the question directly put to them. I have heard there is at present in London a petition complaining of the hasty proceeding of Parliament, and asking for delay, signed by 31,000 adult males of the province of Nova Scotia, and that that petition is in reality signed by at least half of all the male inhabitants of that province. So far as I know, the petition does not protest absolutely against union, but against the manner in which it is being carried out by this scheme and bill, and the hasty measures of the Colonial Office. Now, whether the scheme be a good or bad one, scarcely anything can be more foolish, looking to the future, than that any of the provinces should be dragged into it, either perforce, by the pressure of the Colonial Office, or by any hasty action on the part of Parliament, in the hope of producing a result which probably the populations of those provinces may not wish to see brought about.

I understand that the general election for the Legislature of Nova Scotia, according to the constitution of that colony, will take place in the month of May or June next; that this question has never been fairly placed before the people of that province at an election, and that it has never been discussed and decided by the people; and seeing that only three months or not so much will elapse before there will be an opportunity of ascertaining the opinions of the population of Nova Scotia, I think it is at least a hazardous proceeding to pass this bill through Parliament, binding Nova Scotia, until the clear opinion of that province has been ascertained. If, at a time like this, when you are proposing a union which we all hope is to last for ever, you create a little sore, it will in all probability become a great sore in a short time, and it may be that the intentions of Parliament will be almost entirely frustrated by the haste with which this measure is being pushed forward.

The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think, in the early part of the evening, in answer to a question from this side, spoke of this matter as one of extreme urgency. Well, I cannot discover any urgency in the matter at all. What is urgent is this, that when done it ought to be done wisely, and with the full and free consent of all those populations who are to be bound by this Act and interested in its results. Unless the good-will of those populations is secured, in all probability the Act itself will be a misfortune rather than a blessing to the provinces to which it refers.

The right hon. Gentleman amused me in one part of his speech. He spoke of the filial piety—rather a curious term—of these provinces, and their great anxiety to make everything suit the ideas of this country; and this was said particularly with reference to the proposition for a Senate selected, not elected, for life, by the Governor-General of Canada. He said they were extremely anxious to follow as far as possible the institutions of the mother country. I have not the smallest objection to any people on the face of the earth following our institutions if they like them. Institutions which suit one country, as we all know, are not very likely to suit every other country. With regard to this particular case, the right hon. Gentleman said it is to be observed that Canada has had a nominated council, and has changed it for an elected one, and that surely they had a right if they pleased to go back from an elected council to a nominated council. Well, nobody denies that, but nobody pretends that the people of Canada prefer a nominated council to an elected council. And all the wisdom of the wise men to whom the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford has referred in such glowing terms, unless the experience of present and past times goes for nothing, is but folly if they have come to the conclusion that a nominated council on that continent must be better than an elected council. Still, if they wish it, I should not interfere and try to prevent it. But I venture to say that the clause enabling the Governor-General and his Cabinet to put seventy men in that council for life inserts into the whole scheme the germ of a malady which will spread, and which before very long will require an alteration of this Act and of the constitution of this new Confederation.

But the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that with regard to the representative assembly—which, I suppose, is to be called according to his phrase the House of Commons—they have adopted a very different plan. There they have not followed the course of this country. They have established their House of Representatives directly upon the basis of population. They have adopted the system which prevails in the United States, which upon every ten years' summing up of the census in that country the number of members may be changed, and is by law changed in the different States and districts as the rate of population may have changed. Therefore, in that respect his friends in

Canada have not adopted the principle which prevails in this country, but that which prevails in the United States. I believe they have done that which is right, and which they have a right to do, and which is inevitable there. I regret very much that they have not adopted another system with regard to their council or senate, because I am satisfied—I have not a particle of doubt with regard to it—that we run a great danger of making this Act work ill almost from the beginning.

They have the example of thirty-six States in the United States, in which the Senate is elected, and no man, however sanguine, can hope that seventy-two *stereotyped provincial peers in Canada* will work harmoniously with a body elected upon a system so wide and so general as that which prevails in the States of the American Union. There is one point about which the right hon. Gentleman said nothing, and which I think is so very important that the Member for Oxford, his predecessor in office, might have told us something about it. We know that Canada is a great country, and we know that the population is, or very soon will be, something like 4,000,000, and we may hope that, united under one government, the province may be more capable of defence. But what is intended with regard to the question of defence? Is everything to be done for the province? Is it intended to garrison its fortresses by English troops? At the present moment there are, I believe, in the province 12,000 or 15,000 men.

There are persons in this country, and there are some also in the North American provinces, who are ill-natured enough to say that not a little of the loyalty that is said to prevail in Canada has its price. I think it is natural and reasonable to hope that there is in that country a very strong attachment to this country. But if they are to be constantly applying to us for guarantees for railways, and for grants for fortresses, and for works of defence, then I think it would be far better for them and for us—cheaper for us and less demoralising for them—that they should become an independent State, and maintain their own fortresses, fight their own cause, and build up their own future without relying upon us. And when we know, as everybody knows, that the population of Canada is in a much better position as regards the comforts of home, than is the great bulk of the population of this country, I say the time has come when it ought to be clearly understood that the taxes of England are no longer to go across the ocean to defray expenses of any kind within the Confederation which is about to be formed.

The right hon. Gentleman has never been an advocate *for great expenditure* in the colonies by the mother country. On the contrary, he has been one of the members of this House who have distinguished themselves by what I will call an honest system for the mother country, and what I believe is a wise system for the colonies. But I think that when a measure of this kind is being passed, having such stupendous results upon the condition and the future population of these great colonies, we have a right to ask that there should be some consideration for the revenue and for the taxpayers of this country. In discussing this Bill with the delegates from the provinces, I think it was the duty of the Colonial Secretary to have gone fairly into this question, and, if possible, to have arranged it to the advantage of the colony and the mother country.

I believe there is no delusion greater than this—that there is any party in the United States that wishes to commit any aggression upon Canada, or to annex Canada by force to the United States. There is not a part of the world, in my opinion, that runs less risk of aggression than Canada, except with regard to that foolish and impotent attempt of certain discontented not-long-ago subjects of the Queen, who have left this country. America has no idea of anything of the kind. No American statesman, no American political party, dreams for a

land took a strong interest; and we have welcomed, as the result of that strife, the addition of a great kingdom to the list of European States. Now, our eyes are turned in a contrary direction, and we look to the West. There we see a struggle in progress of the very highest interest to England and to humanity at large. We see there a nation which I shall call the Trans-atlantic English nation—the inheritor and partaker of all the historic glories of this country. We see it torn with intestine broils, and suffering from calamities from which for more than a century past—in fact, for more than two centuries past—this country has been exempt. That struggle is of especial interest to us. We remember the description which one of our great poets gives of Rome,—

'Lone mother of dead empires.'

But England is the living mother of great nations on the American and on the Australian continents, which promise to endow the world with all her knowledge and all her civilization, and with even something more than the freedom she herself enjoys.

Eighty-five years ago, at the time when some of our oldest townsmen were very little children, there were, on the North American continent, Colonies, mainly of Englishmen, containing about three millions of souls. These Colonies we have seen a year ago constituting the United States of North America, and comprising a population of no less than thirty millions of souls. We know that in agriculture and manufactures, with the exception of this kingdom, there is no country in the world which in these arts may be placed in advance of the United States. With regard to inventions, I believe, within the last thirty years, we have received more useful inventions from the United States than from all the other countries of the earth. In that country there are probably ten times as many miles of telegraph as there are in this country, and there are at least five or six times as many miles of railway. The tonnage of its shipping is at least equal to ours, if it does not exceed ours. The prisons of that country—for, even in countries the most favoured, prisons are needful—have been models for other nations of the earth; and many European Governments have sent missions at different times to inquire into the admirable system of education so universally adopted in their free schools throughout the Northern States.

If I were to speak of that country in a religious aspect, I should say that, considering the short space of time to which their history goes back, there is nothing on the face of the earth besides, and never has been, to equal the magnificent arrangement of churches and ministers, and of all the appliances which are thought necessary for a nation to teach Christianity and morality to its people. Besides all this, when I state that for many years past the annual public expenditure of the Government of that country has been somewhere between 10,000,000*l.* and 15,000,000*l.*, I need not perhaps say further, that there has always existed amongst all the population an amount of comfort and prosperity and abounding plenty such as I believe no other country in the world, in any age, has enjoyed.

This is a very fine, but a very true picture; yet it has another side to which I must advert. There has been one great feature in that country, one great contrast, which has been pointed to by all who have commented upon the United States as a feature of danger, as a contrast calculated to give pain. There has been in that country the utmost liberty to the white man, and bondage and degradation to the black man. Now rely upon it, that wherever Christianity lives and flourishes, there must grow up from it, necessarily, a conscience hostile to any oppression and to any wrong; and therefore, from the hour when the United States' Constitution was formed, so long as it left there this great evil—then comparatively small, but now so great—it left there seeds of that

which an American statesman has so happily described, of that 'irrepressible conflict' of which now the whole world is the witness. It has been a common thing for men disposed to carp at the United States to point to this blot upon their fair fame, and to compare it with the boasted declaration of freedom in their Deed and Declaration of Independence. But we must recollect who sowed this seed of trouble, and how and by whom it has been cherished.

Without dwelling upon this stain any longer, I should like to read to you a paragraph from the instructions understood to have been given to the Virginian delegates to Congress, in the month of August, 1774, by Mr. Jefferson, who was perhaps the ablest man the United States had produced up to that time, and who was then actively engaged in its affairs, and who afterwards for two periods filled the office of President. He represented one of these very Slave States —the State of Virginia—and he says:—

'For the most trifling reasons, and sometimes for no conceivable reason at all, his Majesty has rejected laws of the most salutary tendency. The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those Colonies where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state. But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa. Yet our repeated attempts to affect this by prohibition, and by imposing duties which might amount to prohibition, have hitherto been defeated by his Majesty's negative,—thus preferring the immediate advantages of a few British corsairs to the lasting interests of the American States, and to the rights of human nature, deeply wounded by this infamous practice.'

I read this merely to show that, two years before the Declaration of Independence was signed, Mr. Jefferson, acting on behalf of those he represented in Virginia, wrote that protest against the course of the English Government which prevented the Colonists from abolishing the slave trade, preparatory to the abolition of slavery itself.

Well, the United States' Constitution left the slave question for every State to manage for itself. It was a question too difficult to settle then, and apparently every man had the hope and belief that in a few years slavery itself would become extinct. Then there happened a great event in the annals of manufactures and commerce. It was discovered that in those States that article which we in this country now so much depend on, could be produced of the best quality necessary for manufacture, and at a moderate price. From that day to this the growth of cotton has increased there, and its consumption has increased here, and a value which no man dreamed of when Jefferson wrote that paper has been given to the slave and to slave industry. Thus it has grown up to that gigantic institution which now threatens either its own overthrow or the overthrow of that which is a million times more valuable—the United States of America.

The crisis at which we have arrived—I say 'we,' for, after all, we are nearly as much interested as if I was making this speech in the city of Boston or the city of New York—the crisis, I say, which has now arrived, was inevitable. I say that the conscience of the North, never satisfied with the institution of slavery, was constantly urging some men forward to take a more extreme view of the question; and there grew up naturally a section—it may not have been a very numerous one—in favour of the abolition of slavery. A great and powerful party resolved at least upon a restraint and a control of slavery, so that it should not extend beyond the States and the area which it now occupies. But, if we look at the Government of the United States almost ever since the formation of the Union, we shall find the Southern power has been mostly dominant there. If we take thirty-six years after the formation of the present Constitution—I think about 1787—we shall find that for thirty-two of those years every President was a Southern man; and if we take the period from 1828 until 1860,

we shall find that, on every election for President, the South voted in the majority.

We know what an election is in the United States for President of the Republic. There is a most extensive suffrage, and there is the ballot-box. The members of the House of Representatives are elected by the same suffrage, and generally they are elected at the same time. It is thus therefore almost inevitable that the House of Representatives is in accord in public policy with the President for the time being. Every four years there springs from the vote created by the whole people a President over that great nation. I think the world offers no finer spectacle than this; it offers no higher dignity; and there is no greater object of ambition on the political stage on which men are permitted to move. You may point, if you will, to hereditary rulers, to crowns coming down through successive generations of the same family, to thrones based on prescription or on conquest, to sceptres wielded over veteran legions and subject realms,—but to my mind there is nothing more worthy of reverence and obedience, and nothing more sacred, than the authority of the freely chosen magistrate of a great and free people; and if there be on earth and amongst men any right divine to govern, surely it rests with a ruler so chosen and so appointed.

Last year the ceremony of this great election was gone through, and the South, which had been so long successful, found itself defeated. That defeat was followed instantly by secession, and insurrection, and war. In the multitude of articles which have been before us in the newspapers within the last few months, I have no doubt you have seen it stated, as I have seen it, that this question was very much like that upon which the Colonies originally revolted against the Crown of England. It is amazing how little some newspaper writers know, or how little they think you know. When the War of Independence was begun in America, ninety years ago, there were no representatives there at all. The question then was, whether a Ministry in Downing-street, and a corrupt and borough-mongering Parliament, should continue to impose taxes upon three millions of English subjects, who had left their native shores and established themselves in North America. But now the question is not the want of representation, because, as is perfectly notorious, the South is not only represented, but is represented in excess; for, in distributing the number of representatives, which is done every ten years, three out of every five slaves are counted as freemen, and the number of representatives from the Slave States is consequently so much greater than if the freemen, the white men only, were counted. From this cause the Southern States have twenty members more in the House of Representatives than they would have if the members were apportioned on the same principle as in the Northern Free States. Therefore you will see at once that there is no comparison between the state of things when the Colonies revolted, and the state of things now, when this wicked insurrection has broken out.

There is another cause which is sometimes in England assigned for this great misfortune, which is, the protective theories in operation in the Union, and the maintenance of a high tariff. It happens with regard to that, unfortunately, that no American, certainly no one I ever met with, attributed the disasters of the Union to that cause. It is an argument made use of by ignorant Englishmen, but never by informed Americans. I have already shown you that the South, during almost the whole existence of the Union, has been dominant at Washington; and during that period the tariff has existed, and there has been no general dissatisfaction with it. Occasionally, there can be no doubt, their tariff was higher than was thought just, or reasonable, or necessary by some of the States of the South. But the first Act of the United States which levied duties upon imports, passed immediately

after the Union was formed, recited that 'It is necessary for the encouragement and protection of manufactures to levy the duties which follow;' and during the war with England from 1812 to 1815, the people of the United States had to pay for all the articles they brought from Europe many times over the natural cost of those articles, on account of the interruption to the traffic by the English nation.

When the war was over, it was felt by everybody desirable that they should encourage manufactures in their own country; and seeing that England at that precise moment was passing a law to prevent any wheat coming from America until wheat in England had risen to the price of 84s. per quarter, we may be quite satisfied that the doctrine of protection originally entertained did not find less favour at the close of the war in 1815.

There is one remarkable point with regard to this matter which should not be forgotten. Twelve months ago, at the meeting of the Congress of the United States, on the first Monday in December —when the Congress met, you recollect that there were various propositions of compromise, committee meetings of various kinds to try and devise some mode of settling the question between the North and the South, so that disunion might not go on—though I read carefully everything published in the English papers from the United States on the subject, I do not recollect that in a single instance the question of the tariff was referred to, or any change proposed or suggested in the matter as likely to have any effect whatever upon the question of Secession.

There is another point,—whatever might be the influence of the tariff upon the United States, it is as pernicious to the West as it is to the South; and further, that Louisiana, which is a Southern State and a seceded State, has always voted along with Pennsylvania until last year in favour of protection—protection for its sugar, whilst Pennsylvania wished protection for its coal and iron. But if the tariff was onerous and grievous, was that any reason for this great insurrection? Was there ever a country that had a tariff, especially in the article of food, more onerous and more cruel than that which we had in this country twenty years ago? We did not secede. We did not rebel. What we did was to raise money for the purpose of distributing among all the people perfect information upon the question; and many men, as you know, devoted all their labours, for several years, to teach the great and wise doctrine of free trade to the people of England. The price of a single gunboat, the equipment of a single regiment, the garrisoning of a single fort, the cessation of their trade for a single day, cost more than it would have cost to have spread among all the intelligent people of the United States the most complete statement of the whole case; and the West and South could easily have revised, or, if need had been, have repealed the tariff altogether.

The question is a very different and a far more grave question. It is a question of slavery, and for thirty years it has constantly been coming to the surface, disturbing social life, and overthrowing almost all political harmony in the working of the United States. In the North there is no secession; there is no collision. These disturbances and this insurrection are found wholly in the South and in the Slave States; and therefore I think that the man who says otherwise, who contends that it is the tariff, or anything whatsoever else than slavery, is either himself deceived or endeavours to deceive others. The object of the South is this, to escape from the majority who wish to limit the area of slavery. They wish to found a Slave State freed from the influence and opinions of freedom. The Free States in the North now stand before the world as the advocates and defenders of freedom and civilization. The Slave States offer themselves for the recognition of a Christian nation, based upon the foundation, the unchangeable foundation in their eyes, of slavery and barbarism.

I will not discuss the guilt of the men who, ministers of a great nation only last year, conspired to overthrow it. I will not point out or recapitulate the statements of the fraudulent manner in which they disposed of the funds in the national exchequer. I will not point out by name any of the men, in this conspiracy, whom history will designate by titles they would not like to hear; but I say that slavery has sought to break up the most free government in the world, and to found a new State, in the nineteenth century, whose corner-stone is the perpetual bondage of millions of men.

Having thus described what appears to me briefly the literal truth of this matter, what is the course that England would be expected to pursue? We should be neutral as far as regards mingling in the strife. We were neutral in the strife in Italy; but we were not neutral in opinion or sympathy; and we know perfectly well that throughout the whole of Italy at this moment there is a feeling that, though no shot was fired from an English ship, and though no English soldier trod their soil, yet still the opinion of England was potent in Europe, and did much for the creation of the Italian kingdom.

With regard to the United States, you know how much we hate slavery,—that is, some years ago we thought we knew; that we have given twenty millions sterling,—a million a year, or nearly so, of taxes for ever,—to free eight hundred thousand slaves in the English colonies. We knew, or thought we knew, how much we were in love with free government everywhere, although it might not take precisely the same form as our own government. We were for free government in Italy; we were for free government in Switzerland; and we were for free government, even under a republican form, in the United States of America; and with all this, every man would have said that England would wish the American Union to be prosperous and eternal.

Now, suppose we turn our eyes to the East, to the empire of Russia, for a moment. In Russia, as you all know, there has been one of the most important and magnificent changes of policy ever seen in any country. Within the last year or two, the present Emperor of Russia, following the wishes of his father, has insisted upon the abolition of serfdom in that empire; and twenty-three millions of human beings, lately serfs, little better than real slaves, have been raised to the ranks of freedom. Now, suppose that the millions of the serfs of Russia had been chiefly in the South of Russia. We hear of the nobles of Russia, to whom those serfs belonged in a great measure, that they have been hostile to this change; and there has been some danger that the peace of that empire might be disturbed during the change. Suppose these nobles, for the purpose of maintaining in perpetuity the serfdom of Russia, and barring out twenty-three millions of your fellow-creatures from the rights of freedom, had established a great and secret conspiracy, and that they had risen in great and dangerous insurrection against the Russian Government,—I say that you, the people of England, although seven years ago you were in mortal combat with the Russians in the South of Europe,—I believe at this moment you would have prayed Heaven in all sincerity and fervour to give strength to the arm and success to the great wishes of the Emperor, and that the vile and atrocious insurrection might be suppressed.

Well, but let us look a little at what has been said and done in this country since the period when Parliament rose at the beginning of August. There have been two speeches to which I wish to refer, and in terms of approbation. The Duke of Argyll, a member of the present Government,—and, though I have not the smallest personal acquaintance with him, I am free to say that I believe him to be one of the most intelligent and liberal of his order,—the Duke of Argyll made a speech which was fair and friendly to the Government of the

United States. Lord Stanley, only a fortnight ago, I think, made a speech which it is impossible to read without remarking the thought, the liberality, and the wisdom by which it is distinguished. He doubted, it is true, whether the Union could be restored. A man need not be hostile, and must not necessarily be unfriendly, to doubt that or the contrary; but he spoke with fairness and friendliness of the Government of the United States; and he said that *they* were right and justifiable in the course they took; and he gave us some advice,—which is now more important than at the moment when it was given,—that amid the various incidents and accidents of a struggle of this nature, it became a people like this to be very moderate, very calm, and to avoid, as much as possible, any feeling of irritation, which sometimes arises, and sometimes leads to danger.

I mention these two speeches as from Englishmen of great distinction in this country—speeches which I believe will have a beneficial effect on the other side of the Atlantic. Lord John Russell, in the House of Commons, during the last session, made a speech also, in which he rebuked the impertinence of a young Member of the House who had spoken about the bursting of the 'bubble republic.' It was a speech worthy of the best days of Lord John Russell. But at a later period he spoke at Newcastle on an occasion something like this, when the inhabitants, or some portion of the inhabitants, of the town invited him to a public dinner. He described the contest in words something like these—I speak from memory only: 'The North is contending for empire, the South for independence.' Did he mean contending for empire, as England contends for it when making some fresh conquest in India? If he meant that, what he said was not true. But I recollect Lord John Russell, some years ago, in the House of Commons, on an occasion when I made some observation as to the unreasonable expenditure of our colonies, and said that the people of England should not be taxed to defray expenses which the colonies themselves were well able to bear, turned to me with a sharpness which was not necessary, and said, 'The honourable Member has no objection to make a great empire into a little one; but I have.' Perhaps, if he had lived in the United States, if he was a member of the Senate or the House of Representatives there, he would doubt whether it was his duty to consent at once to the destruction of a great country by separation, it may be into two hostile camps, or whether he would not try all the means which were open to him, and would be open to the Government, to avert so unlooked-for and so dire a calamity.

There are other speeches that have been made. I will not refer to them by any quotation,—I will not, out of pity to some of the men who uttered them. I will not bring their names even before you, to give them an endurance which I hope they will not otherwise obtain. I leave them in the obscurity which they so richly merit. But you know as well as I do, that, of all the speeches made since the end of the last session of Parliament by public men, by politicians, the majority of them have either displayed a strange ignorance of American affairs, or a stranger absence of that cordiality and friendship which, I maintain, our American kinsmen have a right to look for at our hands.

And if we part from the speakers and turn to the writers, what do we find there? We find that which is reputed abroad, and has hitherto been believed in at home, as the most powerful representative of English opinion—at least of the richer classes—we find in that particular newspaper there has not been since Mr. Lincoln took office, in March last, as President of the United States, one fair and honourable and friendly article on American affairs. Some of you, I dare say, read it; but, fortunately, every district is now so admirably supplied with local newspapers, that I trust in all time to come

the people of England will drink of purer streams nearer home, and not of those streams which are muddled by party feeling and political intrigue, and by many motives that tend to anything rather than the enlightenment and advantage of the people. It is said,—that very paper has said over and over again,—'Why this war? Why not separate peaceably? Why this fratricidal strife?' I hope it is equally averse to fratricidal strife in other districts; for if it be true that God made of one blood all the families of man to dwell on the face of all the earth, it must be fratricidal strife whether we are slaughtering Russians in the Crimea or bombarding towns on the sea-coast of the United States.

Now no one will expect that I should stand forward as the advocate of war, or as the defender of that great sum of all crimes which is involved in war. But when we are discussing a question of this nature, it is only fair that we should discuss it upon principles which are acknowledged not only in the country where the strife is being carried on, but are universally acknowledged in this country. When I discussed the Russian war, seven or eight years ago, I always condemned it, on principles which were accepted by the Government and people of England, and I took my facts from the blue-books presented to Parliament. I take the liberty, then, of doing that in this case; and I say that, looking at the principles avowed in England, and at its policy, there is no man, who is not absolutely a non-resistant in every sense, who can fairly challenge the conduct of the American Government in this war. It would be a curious thing to find that the party in this country which on every public question affecting England is in favour of war at any cost, when they come to speak of the duty of the Government of the United States, is in favour 'of peace at any price.'

I want to know whether it has ever been admitted by politicians, or statesmen, or people, that a great nation can be broken up at any time by any particular section of any part of that nation. It has been tried occasionally in Ireland, and if it had succeeded history would have said that it was with very good cause. But if anybody tried now to get up a secession or insurrection in Ireland,—and it would be infinitely less disturbing to everything than the secession in the United States, because there is a boundary which nobody can dispute—I am quite sure the *Times* would have its 'Special Correspondent,' and would describe with all the glee and exultation in the world the manner in which the Irish insurrectionists were cut down and made an end of.

Let any man try in this country to restore the heptarchy, do you think that any portion of the people would think that the project could be tolerated for a moment? But if you look at a map of the United States, you will see that there is no country in the world, probably, at this moment, where any plan of separation between the North and the South, as far as the question of boundary is concerned, is so surrounded with insurmountable difficulties. For example, Maryland is a Slave State; but Maryland, by a large majority, voted for the Union. Kentucky is a Slave State, one of the finest in the Union, and containing a fine people; Kentucky has voted for the Union, but has been invaded from the South. Missouri is a Slave State; but Missouri has not seceded, and has been invaded by the South, and there is a secession party in that State. There are parts of Virginia which have formed themselves into a new State, resolved to adhere to the North; and there is no doubt a considerable Northern and Union feeling in the State of Tennessee. I have no doubt there is in every other State. In fact, I am not sure that there is not now within the sound of my voice a citizen of the State of Alabama, who could tell you that in his State the question of secession has never been put to the vote; and that there are great numbers of men, reasonable and

thoughtful and just men, in that State, who entirely deplore the condition of things there existing.

Then, what would you do with all those States, and with what we may call the loyal portion of the people of those States? Would you allow them to be dragooned into this insurrection, and into the formation or the becoming parts of a new State, to which they themselves are hostile? And what would you do with the City of Washington? Washington is in a Slave State. Would anybody have advised that President Lincoln and his Cabinet, with all the members of Congress, of the House of Representatives and the Senate, from the North, with their wives and children, and everybody else who was not positively in favour of the South, should have set off on their melancholy pilgrimage northwards, leaving that capital, hallowed to them by such associations,—having its name even from the father of their country,—leaving Washington to the South, because Washington is situated in a Slave State?

Again, what do you say to the Mississippi River, as you see it upon the map, the 'father of waters,' rolling its gigantic stream to the ocean? Do you think that the fifty millions which one day will occupy the banks of that river northward, will ever consent that its great stream shall roll through a foreign, and it may be a hostile State? And more, there are four millions of negroes in subjection. For them the American Union is directly responsible. They are not secessionists; they are now, as they always were, not citizens nor subjects, but legally under the care and power of the Government of the United States. Would you consent that these should be delivered up to the tender mercies of their taskmasters, the defenders of slavery as an everlasting institution?

But if all had been surrendered without a struggle, what then? What would the writers in this newspaper and other newspapers have said? If a bare rock in your empire, that would not keep a goat—a single goat—alive, be touched by any foreign power, the whole empire is roused to resistance: and if there be, from accident or passion, the smallest insult to your flag, what do your newspaper writers say upon the subject, and what is said in all your towns and upon all your Exchanges? I will tell you what they would have said if the Government of the Northern States had taken their insidious and dishonest advice. They would have said the great Republic was a failure, that democracy had murdered patriotism, that history afforded no example of such meanness and of such cowardice; and they would have heaped unmeasured obloquy and contempt upon the people and Government who had taken that course.

They tell you, these candid friends of the United States,—they tell you that all freedom is gone; that the Habeas Corpus Act, if they ever had one, is known no longer; and that any man may be arrested at the dictum of the President or of the Secretary of State. Well, but in 1848 you recollect, many of you, that there was a small insurrection in Ireland. It was an absurd thing altogether; but what was done then? I saw, in one night, in the House of Commons, a bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act passed through all its stages. What more did I see? I saw a bill brought in by the Whig Government of that day, Lord John Russell being the Premier, which made speaking against the Government and against the Crown—which up to that time had been sedition—which proposed to make it felony; and it was only by the greatest exertions of a few of the Members that the Act, in that particular, was limited to a period of two years. In the same session a bill was brought in called an Alien Bill, which enabled the Home Secretary to take any foreigner whatsoever, not being a naturalized Englishman, and in twenty-four hours to send him out of the country. Although a man might have committed no crime, this might be done to him, apparently only on suspicion.

But suppose that an insurgent army had been so near to London that you could see its outposts from every suburb of your Capital, what then do you think would have been the regard of the Government of Great Britain for personal liberty, if it interfered with the necessities, and, as they might think, the salvation of the State? I recollect, in 1848, when the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended in Ireland, that a number of persons in Liverpool, men there of position and of wealth, presented a petition to the House of Commons, praying—what? That the Habeas Corpus Act should not be suspended? No. They were not content with its suspension in Ireland; and they prayed the House of Commons to extend that suspension to Liverpool. I recollect that at that time—and I am sure my friend Mr. Wilson will bear me out in what I say—the Mayor of Liverpool telegraphed to the Mayor of Manchester, and that messages were sent on to London nearly every hour. The Mayor of Manchester heard from the Mayor of Liverpool that certain Irishmen in Liverpool, conspirators, or fellow-conspirators with those in Ireland, were going to burn the cotton warehouses in Liverpool and the cotton mills of Lancashire. I read that petition from Liverpool. I took it from the table of the House of Commons, and read it, and I handed it over to a statesman of great eminence, who has been but just removed from us—I refer to Sir James Graham, a man not second to any in the House of Commons for his knowledge of affairs and for his great capacity—I handed to him that petition. He read it; and after he had read it, he rose from his seat, and laid it upon the table with a gesture of abhorrence and disgust. Now that was a petition from the town of Liverpool, in which some persons have been making themselves very ridiculous of late by reason of their conduct on this American question.

There is one more point. It has been said, 'How much better it would be'—not for the United States, but—'for us, that these States should be divided.' I recollect meeting a gentleman in Bond-street one day before the session was over. He was a rich man, and one whose voice is much heard in the House of Commons; but his voice is not heard when he is on his legs, but when he is cheering other speakers; and he said to me: 'After all, this is a sad business about the United States; but still I think it very much better that they should be split up. In twenty years,' or in fifty years, I forget which it was, 'they will be so powerful that they will bully all Europe.' And a distinguished Member of the House of Commons—distinguished there by his eloquence, distinguished more by his many writings—I mean Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton—he did not exactly express a hope, but he ventured on something like a prediction, that the time would come when there would be, I do not know how many, but about as many independent States on the American Continent as you can count upon your fingers.

There cannot be a meaner motive than this I am speaking of, in forming a judgment on this question,—that it is 'better for us'—for whom? the people of England, or the Government of England?—that the United States should be severed, and that the North American continent should be as the continent of Europe is, in many States, and subject to all the contentions and disasters which have accompanied the history of the States of Europe. I should say that, if a man had a great heart within him, he would rather look forward to the day when, from that point of land which is habitable nearest to the Pole, to the shores of the Great Gulf, the whole of that vast continent might become one great confederation of States,—without a great army, and without a great navy,—not mixing itself up with the entanglements of European politics,—without a custom-house inside, through the whole length and breadth of its territory,—and with freedom everywhere, equality everywhere, law everywhere, peace everywhere,—such a confederation would afford at least some hope that man is not

forsaken of Heaven, and that the future of our race may be better than the past.

It is a common observation, that our friends in America are very irritable. And I think it is very likely, of a considerable number of them, to be quite true. Our friends in America are involved in a great struggle. There is nothing like it before in their or in any history. No country in the world was ever more entitled, in my opinion, to the sympathy and the forbearance of all friendly nations, than are the United States at this moment. They have there some newspapers that are no wiser than ours. They have there some papers, which, up to the election of Mr. Lincoln, were his bitterest and most unrelenting foes, who, when the war broke out, and it was not safe to take the line of Southern support, were obliged to turn round and to appear to adopt the prevalent opinion of the country. But they undertook to serve the South in another way, and that was by exaggerating every difficulty and misstating every fact, if so doing could serve their object of creating distrust between the people of the Northern States and the people of this United Kingdom. If the *Times* in this country has done all that it could do to poison the minds of the people of England, and to irritate the minds of the people of America, the *New York Herald*, I am sorry to say, has done, I think, all that it could, or all that it dared to do, to provoke mischief between the Government in Washington and the Government in London.

Now there is one thing which I must state that I think they have a solid reason to complain of; and I am very sorry to have to mention it, because it blames our present Foreign Minister, against whom I am not anxious to say a word, and, recollecting his speech in the House of Commons, I should be slow to conclude that he had any feeling hostile to the United States' Government. You recollect that during the session—it was on the 14th of May—a Proclamation came out which acknowledged the South as a belligerent power, and proclaimed the neutrality of England. A little time before that, I forget how many days, Mr. Dallas, the late Minister from the United States, had left London for Liverpool and America. He did not wish to undertake any affairs for his Government, by which he was not appointed,—I mean that of President Lincoln,—and he left what had to be done to his successor, who was on his way, and whose arrival was daily expected. Mr. Adams, the present Minister from the United States, is a man whom, if he lived in England, you would speak of as belonging to one of the noblest families of the country. His father and his grandfather were Presidents of the United States. His grandfather was one of the great men who achieved the independence of the United States. There is no family in that country having more claims upon what I should call the veneration and the affection of the people than the family of Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams came to this country. He arrived in London on the night of the 13th of May. On the 14th, that Proclamation was issued. It was known that he was coming; but he was not consulted; the Proclamation was not delayed for a day, although there was nothing pressing, no reason why the Proclamation should not have been notified to him. If communications of a friendly nature had taken place with him and with the American Government, they could have found no fault with this step, because it was perhaps inevitable, before the struggle had proceeded far, that this Proclamation would be issued. But I have the best reasons for knowing that there is no single thing that has happened during the course of these events which has created more surprise, more irritation, and more distrust in the United States, with respect to this country, than the fact that that Proclamation was not delayed one single day, until the Minister from America could come here, and until it could be done, if not with his consent, or his

concurrence, yet in that friendly manner that would probably have avoided all the unpleasantness which has occurred.

Now I am obliged to say—and I say it with the utmost pain—that if we have not done things that are plainly hostile to the North, and if we have not expressed affection for slavery, and, outwardly and openly, hatred for the Union,—I say that there has not been that friendly and cordial neutrality which, if I had been a citizen of the United States, I should have expected; and I say further, that, if there has existed considerable irritation at that, it must be taken as a measure of the high appreciation which the people of those States place upon the opinion of the people of England. If I had been addressing this audience ten days ago, so far as I know, I should have said just what I have said now; and although, by an untoward event, circumstances are somewhat, even considerably, altered, yet I have thought it desirable to make this statement, with a view, so far as I am able to do it, to improve the opinion of England, and to assuage feelings of irritation in America, if there be any, so that no further difficulties may arise in the progress of this unhappy strife.

But there has occurred an event which was announced to us only a week ago, which is one of great importance, and it may be one of some peril. It is asserted that what is called 'international law' has been broken by the seizure of the Southern Commissioners on board an English trading steamer by a steamer of war of the United States. Now, what is international law? You have heard that the opinions of the law officers of the Crown are in favour of this view of the case—that the law has been broken. I am not at all going to say that it has not. It would be imprudent in me to set my opinion on a legal question which I have only partially examined, against their opinion on the same question, which I presume they have carefully examined. But this I say, that international law is not to be found in an Act of Parliament—it is not in so many clauses. You know that it is difficult to find the law. I can ask the Mayor, or any magistrate around me, whether it is not very difficult to find the law, even when you have found the Act of Parliament, and found the clause. But when you have no Act of Parliament, and no clause, you may imagine that the case is still more difficult.

Now, maritime law, or international law, consists of opinions and precedents for the most part, and it is very unsettled. The opinions are the opinions of men of different countries, given at different times; and the precedents are not always like each other. The law is very unsettled, and, for the most part, I believe it to be exceedingly bad. In past times, as you know from the histories you read, this country has been a fighting country; we have been belligerents, and, as belligerents, we have carried maritime law, by our own powerful hand, to a pitch that has been very oppressive to foreign, and especially so to neutral nations. Well, now, for the first time, unhappily,—almost for the first time in our history for the last two hundred years,—we are not belligerents, but neutrals; and we are disposed to take, perhaps, rather a different view of maritime and international law.

Now, the act which has been committed by the American steamer, in my opinion, whether it was legal or not, was both impolitic and bad. That is my opinion. I think it may turn out, almost certainly, that, so far as the taking of those men from that ship was concerned, it was an act wholly unknown to, and unauthorized by, the American Government. And if the American Government believe, on the opinion of their law officers, that the act is illegal, I have no doubt they will make fitting reparation; for there is no Government in the world that has so strenuously insisted upon modifications of international law, and been so anxious to be guided always by the most moderate and merciful interpretation of that law.

Now, our great advisers of the *Times* newspaper have been persuading people that this is merely one of a series of acts which denote the determination of the Washington Government to pick a quarrel with the people of England. Did you ever know anybody who was not very nearly dead drunk, who, having as much upon his hands as he could manage, would offer to fight everybody about him? Do you believe that the United States' Government, presided over by President Lincoln, so constitutional in all his acts, so moderate as he has been—representing at this moment that great party in the United States, happily now in the ascendancy, which has always been especially in favour of peace, and especially friendly to England—do you believe that such a Government, having now upon its hands an insurrection of the most formidable character in the South, would invite the armies and the fleets of England to combine with that insurrection, and, it might be, to render it impossible that the Union should ever again be restored? I say, that single statement, whether it came from a public writer or a public speaker, is enough to stamp him for ever with the character of being an insidious enemy of both countries.

Well, now, what have we seen during the last week? People have not been, I am told—I have not seen much of it—quite as calm as sensible men should be. Here is a question of law. I will undertake to say, that when you have from the United States' Government—if they think the act legal—a statement of their view of the case, they will show you that, fifty or sixty years ago, during the wars of that time, there were scores of cases that were at least as bad as this, and some infinitely worse. And if it were not so late to-night—and I am not anxious now to go into the question further—I could easily place before you cases of extreme outrage committed by us when we were at war, and for many of which, I am afraid, little or no reparation was offered. But let us bear this in mind, that during this struggle incidents and accidents will happen. Bear in mind the advice of Lord Stanley, so opportune and so judicious. Do not let your newspapers, or your public speakers, or any man, take you off your guard, and bring you into that frame of mind under which your Government, if it desires war, may be driven to engage in it; for one may be almost as fatal and as evil as the other.

What can be more monstrous than that we, as we call ourselves, to some extent, an educated, a moral, and a Christian nation—at a moment when an accident of this kind occurs, before we have made a representation to the American Government, before we have heard a word from it in reply—should be all up in arms, every sword leaping from its scabbard, and every man looking about for his pistols and his blunderbusses? I think the conduct pursued—and I have no doubt just the same is pursued by a certain class in America—is much more the conduct of savages than of Christian and civilized men. No, let us be calm. You recollect how we were dragged into the Russian war—how we 'drifted' into it. You know that I, at least, have not upon my head any of the guilt of that fearful war. You know that it cost one hundred millions of money to this country; that it cost at least the lives of forty thousand Englishmen; that it disturbed your trade; that it nearly doubled the armies of Europe; that it placed the relations of Europe on a much less peaceful footing than before; and that it did not effect one single thing of all those that it was promised to effect.

I recollect speaking on this subject, within the last two years, to a man whose name I have already mentioned, Sir James Graham, in the House of Commons. He was a Minister at the time of that war. He was reminding me of a severe onslaught which I had made upon him and Lord Palmerston for attending a dinner at the Reform Club when Sir Charles Napier was appointed to the command of the

Baltic fleet; and he remarked, 'What a severe thrashing' I had given them in the House of Commons! I said, 'Sir James, tell me candidly, did you not deserve it?' He said, 'Well, you were entirely right about that war; we were entirely wrong, and we never should have gone into it.' And this is exactly what everybody will say, if you go into a war about this business, when it is over. When your sailors and soldiers, so many of them as may be slaughtered, are gone to their last account; when your taxes are increased, your business permanently—it may be—injured; and when embittered feelings for generations have been created between America and England—then your statesmen will tell you that 'we ought not to have gone into the war.'

But they will very likely say, as many of them tell me, 'What could we do in the frenzy of the public mind?' Let them not add to the frenzy, and let us be careful that nobody drives us into that frenzy. Remembering the past, remembering at this moment the perils of a friendly people, and seeing the difficulties by which they are surrounded, let us, I entreat of you, see if there be any real moderation in the people of England, and if magnanimity, so often to be found amongst individuals, is absolutely wanting in a great nation.

Now, Government may discuss this matter—they may arrange it—they may arbitrate it. I have received here, since I came into the room, a despatch from a friend of mine in London, referring to this matter. I believe some portion of it is in the papers this evening, but I have not seen them. He states that General Scott, whom you know by name, who has come over from America to France, being in a bad state of health—the General lately of the American army, and a man whose reputation in that country is hardly second to that which the Duke of Wellington held during his lifetime in this country—General Scott has written a letter on the American difficulty. He denies that the Cabinet of Washington had ordered the seizure of the Southern Commissioners, if found under a neutral flag. The question of legal right involved in the seizure, the General thinks a very narrow ground on which to force a quarrel with the United States. As to Messrs. Slidell and Mason being or not being contraband, the General answers for it, that, if Mr. Seward cannot convince Earl Russell that they bore that character, Earl Russell will be able to convince Mr. Seward that they did not. He pledges himself that, if this Government cordially agreed with that of the United States in establishing the immunity of neutrals from the oppressive right of search and seizure on suspicion, the Cabinet of Washington will not hesitate to purchase so great a boon to peaceful trading-vessels.

Now, then, before I sit down, let me ask you what is this people, about which so many men in England at this moment are writing, and speaking, and thinking, with harshness, I think with injustice, if not with great bitterness? Two centuries ago, multitudes of the people of this country found a refuge on the North American continent, escaping from the tyranny of the Stuarts and from the bigotry of Laud. Many noble spirits from our country made great experiments in favour of human freedom on that continent. Bancroft, the great historian of his own country, has said, in his own graphic and emphatic language, 'The history of the colonization of America is the history of the crimes of Europe.' From that time down to our own period, America has admitted the wanderers from every clime. Since 1815, a time which many here remember, and which is within my lifetime, more than three millions of persons have emigrated from the United Kingdom to the United States. During the fifteen years from 1845 or 1846 to 1859 or 1860—a period so recent that we all remember the most trivial circumstances that have happened in that time—during those fifteen years

more than two million three hundred and twenty thousand persons left the shores of the United Kingdom as emigrants for the States of North America.

At this very moment, then, there are millions in the United States who personally, or whose immediate parents, have at one time been citizens of this country. They found a home in the Far West; they subdued the wilderness; they met with plenty there, which was not afforded them in their native country; and they have become a great people. There may be persons in England who are jealous of those States. There may be men who dislike democracy, and who hate a republic; there may be even those whose sympathies warm towards the slave oligarchy of the South. But of this I am certain, that only misrepresentation the most gross or calumny the most wicked can sever the tie which unites the great mass of the people of this country with their friends and brethren beyond the Atlantic.

Now, whether the Union will be restored or not, or the South achieve an unhonoured independence or not, I know not, and I predict not. But this I think I know—that in a few years, a very few years, the twenty millions of freemen in the North will be thirty millions, or even fifty millions—a population equal to or exceeding that of this kingdom. When that time comes, I pray that it may not be said amongst them, that, in the darkest hour of their country's trials, England, the land of their fathers, looked on with icy coldness and saw unmoved the perils and calamities of their children. As for me, I have but this to say: I am but one in this audience, and but one in the citizenship of this country; but if all other tongues are silent, mine shall speak for that policy which gives hope to the bondsmen of the South, and which tends to generous thoughts, and generous words, and generous deeds, between the two great nations who speak the English language, and from their origin are alike entitled to the English name.

AMERICA.

II.

THE WAR AND THE SUPPLY OF COTTON.

BIRMINGHAM, DECEMBER 18, 1862.

I AM afraid there was a little excitement during a part of my honourable Colleague's speech, which was hardly favourable to that impartial consideration to which he appealed. He began by referring to a question—or, I might say, to two questions, for it was one great question in two parts,—which at this moment occupies the mind, and, I think, must afflict the heart of every thoughtful man in this country—the calamity which has fallen upon the county from which I come, and the strife which is astonishing the world on the other side of the Atlantic.

I shall not enter into details with regard to that calamity, because you have had already, I believe, meetings in this town, many details have been published, contributions of a generous character have been made, and you are doing—and especially, if I am rightly informed, are your artisans doing—their duty with regard to the unfortunate condition of the population amongst which I live. But this I may state in a sentence, that the greatest, probably the most prosperous, manufacturing industry that this country or the world has ever seen, has been suddenly and unexpectedly stricken down, but by a blow which has not been unforeseen or unforetold. Nearly five hundred thousand persons—men, women, and children—at this moment are saved from the utmost extremes of famine, not a few of them from death, by the contributions which they are receiving from all parts of the country. I will not attempt here an elaborate eulogy of the generosity of the givers, nor will I endeavour to paint the patience and the gratitude of those who suffer and receive; but I believe the conduct of the country, with regard to this great misfortune, is an honour to all classes and to every section of this people.

Some have remarked that there is perfect order where there has been so much anxiety and suffering. I believe there is scarcely a thoughtful man in Lancashire who will not admit that one great cause of the patience and good conduct of the people, besides the fact that they know so much is being done for them, is to be found in the extensive information they possess, and which of late years, and now more than ever, has been communicated to them through the instrumentality of an untaxed press. Noble Lords who have recently spoken, official men, and public men, have taken upon them to tell the people of Lancashire that nobody has done wrong, and that, in point of fact, if it had not been for a family quarrel in that dreadful Republic, everything would have gone on smoothly, and that nobody can be blamed for our present sufferings.

Now, if you will allow me, I should

like to examine for a few minutes whether this be true. If you read the papers with regard to this question, you will find that, barring whatever chance there may be of our again soon receiving a supply of cotton from America, the hopes of the whole country are directed to India. Our Government of India is not one of to-day. It is a Government that has lasted as long as the Government of the United States, and it has had far more insurrections and secessions, not one of which, I suppose some in this meeting must regret, has been tolerated by our Government or recognised by France. Our Government in India has existed for a hundred years in some portion of the country where cotton is a staple produce of the land. But we have had under the name of a Government what I have always described as a piratical joint-stock company, beginning with Lord Clive, and ending, as I now hope it has ended, with Lord Dalhousie. And under that Government I will undertake to say that it was not in nature that you could have such improvement as should ever give you a fair supply of cotton.

Up to the year 1814, the whole trade of India was a monopoly of the East India Company. They took everything there that went there; they brought everything back that came here; they did whatsoever they pleased in the territories under their rule. I have here an extract from a report of a Member of Council in India, Mr. Richards, published in the year 1812. He reports to the Court of Directors, that the whole cotton produce of the district was taken, without leaving any portion of the avowed share of the Ryots, that is, the cultivators, at their own free disposal; and he says that they are not suffered to know what they shall get for it until after it has been far removed from their reach and from the country by exportation coastwise to Bombay; and he says further, that the Company's servants fixed the prices from ten to thirty per cent. under the general market rate in the districts that were not under the Company's rule. During the three years before the Company's monopoly was abolished, in 1814, the whole cotton that we received from India (I quote from the brokers' returns from Liverpool), was only 17,000 bales; in the three years afterwards, owing, no doubt, partly to the great increase in price, we received 551,000 bales, during which same three years the United States only sent us 611,000. Thus you see that in 1817, 1818, and 1819, more than forty years ago, the quantity we received from India was close upon, and in the year 1818 it actually exceeded, that which we received from the United States.

Well, now I come down to the year 1832, and I have then the report of another Member of Council, and beg every working man here, every man who is told that there is nobody to blame, to listen to one or two extracts from the report. Mr. Warden, Member of the Council, gave evidence in 1832 that the money-tax levied on Surat cotton was 56 rupees per candy, leaving the grower only 24 rupees, or rather less than $\frac{3}{4}d.$ per pound. In 1846 there was so great a decay of the cotton trade of Western India, that a committee was appointed in Bombay, partly of Members of the Chamber of Commerce and partly of servants of the Government, and they made a report in which they stated that from every candy of cotton—a candy is 7 cwt. or 784 lbs.—costing 80 rupees, which is 160 shillings in Bombay, the Government had taken 48 rupees as land-tax and sea-duty, leaving only 32 rupees, or less than $\frac{3}{4}d.$ per pound, to be divided among all parties, from the Bombay seller to the Surat grower.

In 1847 I was in the House of Commons, and I brought forward a proposition for a select committee to inquire into this whole question; for in that year Lancashire was on the verge of the calamity that has now overtaken it; cotton was very scarce, for hundreds of the mills were working short time, and many were closed altogether. That committee reported that, in all the districts of Bombay and Madras

where cotton was cultivated, and generally over those agricultural regions, the people were in a condition of the most abject and degraded pauperism; and I will ask you whether it is possible for a people in that condition to produce anything great, or anything good, or anything constant, which the world requires?

It is not to be wondered at that the quality of the cotton should be bad—so bad that it is illustrated by an anecdote which a very excellent man of the Methodist body told me the other day. He said that at a prayer-meeting, not more than a dozen miles from where I live, one of the ministers was earnest in supplication to the Supreme; he detailed, no doubt, a great many things which he thought they were in want of, and amongst the rest, a supply of cotton for the famishing people in that district. When he prayed for cotton, some man with a keen sense of what he had suffered, in response exclaimed, 'O Lord! but not Surat.'

Now, my argument is this, and my assertion is this, that the growth of cotton in India,—the growth of an article which was native and common in India before America was discovered by Europeans,—that the growth of that article has been systematically injured, strangled, and destroyed by the stupid and wicked policy of the Indian Government.

I saw, the other day, a letter from a gentleman as well acquainted with Indian affairs, perhaps, as any man in India,—a letter written to a member of the Madras Government,—in which he stated his firm opinion that, if it had not been for the Bombay Committee in 1846, and for my Committee in 1848, there would not have been any cotton sent from India at this moment to be worked up in Lancashire. Now, in 1846, the quantity of cotton coming from India had fallen to 94,000 bales. How has it increased since then? In 1859 it had reached 509,000 bales; in 1860, 562,000 bales; and last year, owing to the extraordinarily high price, it had reached 986,000 bales, and I suppose this year will be about the same as last year.

I think, in justification of myself and of some of those with whom I have acted, I am entitled to ask your time for a few moments, to show you what has been not so much done as attempted to be done to improve this state of things; and what has been the systematic opposition that we have had to contend with. In the year 1847, I moved for that committee, in a speech from which I shall read one short extract. I said that 'We ought not to forget that the whole of the cotton grown in America is produced by slave labour, and this, I think, all will admit,—that, no matter as to the period in which slavery may have existed, abolished it will ultimately be, either by peaceable means or by violent means. Whether it comes to an end by peaceable means or otherwise, there will in all probability be an interruption to the production of cotton, and the calamity which must in consequence fall upon a part of the American Union will be felt throughout the manufacturing districts of this country.'

The committee was not refused;—Governments do not always refuse committees; they do not much fear them on matters of this kind; they put as many men on as the mover of the committee does, and sometimes more, and they often consider a committee, as my honourable Colleague will tell you, rather a convenient way of burying an unpleasant question, at least for another session. The committee sat during the session of 1848, and it made a report, from which I shall quote, not an extract, but the sense of an extract. The evidence was very extensive, very complete, and entirely condemnatory of the whole system of the Indian Government with regard to the land and agricultural produce, and one might have hoped that something would have arisen from it, and probably something has arisen from it, but so slowly that you have no fruit,—nothing on which you can calculate, even up to this hour.

Well, in 1850, as nothing more was done, I thought it time to take another

step, and I gave notice of a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission to go to India for the express purpose of ascertaining the truth of this matter. I moved, 'That a Royal Commission proceed to India to inquire into the obstacles which prevent the increased growth of cotton in India, and to report upon any circumstance which may injuriously affect the economical and industrial condition of the native population, being cultivators of the soil, within the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay.'

Now I shall read you one extract from my speech on that occasion, which refers to this question of peril in America. I said, 'But there is another point, that, whilst the production of cotton in the United States results from slave labour, whether we approve of any particular mode of abolishing slavery in any country or not, we are all convinced that it will be impossible in any country, and most of all in America, to keep between two and three millions of the population permanently in a state of bondage. By whatever means that system is to be abolished, whether by insurrection,—which I should deplore,—or by some great measure of justice from the Government,—one thing is certain, that the production of cotton must be interfered with for a considerable time after such an event has taken place; and it may happen that the greatest measure of freedom that has ever been conceded may be a measure the consequence of which will inflict mischief upon the greatest industrial pursuit that engages the labour of the operative population of this country.'

Now, it was not likely the Government could pay much attention to this, for at that precise moment the Foreign Office—then presided over by Lord Palmerston—was engaged with an English fleet in the waters of Greece, in collecting a bad debt for one Don Pacifico, a Jew, who made a fraudulent demand on the Greek Government for injuries said to have been committed upon him in Greece. Notwithstanding this, I called upon Lord John Russell, who was then the Prime Minister, and asked him whether he would grant the Commission I was going to move for. I will say this for him, he appeared to agree with me that it was a reasonable thing. I believe he saw the peril, and that my proposition was a proper one, but he said he wished he could communicate with Lord Dalhousie. But it was in the month of June, and he could not do that, and hear from him again before the close of the session. He told me that Sir John Hobhouse, then President of the India Board, was very much against it; and I answered, 'Doubtless he is, because he speaks as the mouthpiece of the East India Company, against whom I am bringing this inquiry.'

Well, my proposition came before the House, and, as some of you may recollect, it was opposed by the President of the India Board, and the Commission was consequently not granted. I had seen Sir Robert Peel,—this was only ten days before his death,—I had seen Sir Robert Peel, acquainted as he was with Lancashire interests, and had endeavoured to enlist him in my support. He cordially and entirely approved of my motion, and he remained in the House during the whole of the time I was speaking; but when Sir John Hobhouse rose to resist the motion, and he found the Government would not consent to it, he then left his seat, and left the House. The night after, or two nights after, he met me in the lobby; and he said he thought it was but right he should explain why he left the House after the conversation he had held with me on this question before. He said he had hoped the Government would agree to the motion, but when he found they would not, his position was so delicate with regard to them and his own old party, that he was most anxious that nothing should induce him, unless under the pressure of some great extremity, to appear even to oppose them on any matter before the House. Therefore, from a very delicate sense of honour, he did not

say what I am sure he would have been glad to have said, and the proposition did not receive from him that help which, if it had received it, would have surmounted all obstacles.

To show the sort of men who are made ministers—Sir John Hobhouse had on these occasions always a speech of the same sort. He said this: 'With respect to the peculiar urgency of the time, he could not say the honourable Gentleman had made out his case; for he found that the importation of cotton from all countries showed an immense increase during the last three years.' We know that the importation of cotton has shown an 'immense increase' almost every three years for the last fifty years. But it was because that increase was entirely, or nearly so, from one source, and that source one of extreme peril, that I asked for the inquiry for which I moved. He said he had a letter in his hand—and he shook it at me—from the Secretary of the Commercial Association of Manchester, in which the directors of that body declared by special resolution that my proposition was not necessary, that an inquiry might do harm, and that they were abundantly satisfied with everything that these lords of Leadenhall-street were doing. He said, 'Such was the letter of the Secretary of the Association, and it was a complete answer to the hon. Gentleman who had brought forward this motion.'

At this moment one of these gentlemen to whom I have referred, then President of the Board of Control, Governor of India, author, as he told a committee on which I sat, of the Affghan war, is now decorated with a Norman title—for our masters even after a lapse of eight hundred years ape the Norman style—sits in the House of Peers, and legislates for you, having neglected in regard to India every great duty which appertained to his high office; and to show that it is not only cabinets and monarchs who thus distribute honours and rewards, the President of that Commercial Association through whose instigation that letter was written is now one of the representatives of Manchester, the great centre of that manufacture whose very foundation is now crumbling into ruin.

But I was not, although discouraged, baffled. I went down to the Chamber of Commerce in Manchester, and along with Mr. Bazley, then the President of the Chamber, I believe, and Mr. Henry Ashworth, who is now the President of that Chamber, and many others, we determined to have a Commission of Inquiry of our own. We raised a subscription of more than 2,000*l.*; we selected a gentleman—Mr. Alexander Mackay, the author of one of the very best books ever written by an Englishman upon America, *The Western World*—and we invited him to become our Commissioner, and, unfortunately for him, he accepted the office. He went to India, he made many inquiries, he wrote many interesting reports; but, like many others who go to India, his health declined; he returned from Bombay, but he did not live to reach home.

We were greatly disappointed at this on public grounds, besides our regret for the loss of one of so much private worth. Some of us, Mr. Bazley particularly, undertook the charge of publishing these reports, and a friend of Mr. Mackay's, now no longer living, undertook the editorship of them, and they were published in a volume called *Western India*; and that volume received such circulation as a work of that nature is likely to have.

In the year 1853 there came the proposition for the renewal of the East India Company's charter. I opposed that to the utmost of my power in the House of Commons, and some of you will recollect I came down here with Mr. Danby Seymour, the Member for Poole, a gentleman well acquainted with Indian affairs, and attended a meeting in this very hall, to denounce the policy of conferring the government of that great country for another twenty years upon a Company which had so entirely neglected every duty belonging to it

except one—the duty of collecting taxes. In 1854, Colonel Cotton—now Sir Arthur Cotton, one of the most distinguished engineers in India—came down to Manchester. We had a meeting at the Town Hall, and he gave an address on the subject of opening the Godavery River, in order that it might form a mode of transit, cheap and expeditious, from the cotton districts to the north of that river; and it was proposed to form a joint-stock company to do it, but unfortunately the Russian war came on and disturbed all commercial projects, and made it impossible to raise money for any—as some might call it—speculative purpose, like that of opening an Indian river.

Well, in 1857 there came the mutiny. What did our rulers do then? Sir Charles Wood, in 1853, had made a speech five hours long, most of it in praise of the government of the East India Company. In 1858—at the opening of the session in 1858, I think—the Government brought in a Bill to abolish that Company, and to establish a new form of government for India. That was exactly what we asked them to do in 1853; but, as in everything else, nothing is done until there comes an overwhelming calamity, when the most obtuse and perverse is driven from his position. In 1858 that Bill passed, under the auspices of Lord Stanley. It was not a Bill such as I think Lord Stanley approved when he was not a Minister; it was not a Bill such as I believe he would have brought in if he had been permitted by the House and the Cabinet to have brought in a better Bill. It abolished the East India Company, established a new Council, and left things to a great extent much in the same state as they were.

During the discussion of that Bill, I made a speech on Indian affairs, which I believe goes to the root of the matter. I protested then as now against the notion of governing one hundred and fifty millions of people—twenty different nations with twenty different languages—from a little coterie of rulers in the city of Calcutta. I proposed that the country should be divided into five or six separate, and, as regards each other, independent Presidencies of equal rank, with a governor and council in each, and each government corresponding with, and dependent upon, and responsible to, a Secretary of State in this country. I am of opinion that if such a Government were established, one in each Presidency, and if there was a first-class engineer, with an efficient staff, whose business should be to determine what public works should be carried on, some by the Government and some by private companies, I believe that ten years of such judicious labours would work an entire revolution in the condition of India; and if it had been done when I first began to move in this question, I have not the smallest doubt we might have had at this moment any quantity of cotton whatever that the mills of Lancashire require.

Well, after this, I am afraid some of my friends may feel, and my opponents will say, that it is very egotistical in me to have entered into these details. But I think, after this recapitulation, I am at liberty to say I am guiltless of that calamity which has fallen upon us. And I may mention that some friends of mine—Mr. John Dickinson, now Chairman of the Indian Reform Association, Mr. Bazley, one of the Members for Manchester, Mr. Ashworth, the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester, and Mr. John Benjamin Smith, the Member for Stockport—present themselves at this moment to my eyes as those who have been largely instrumental in calling the attention of Parliament and of the country to this great question of the reform of our Government in India.

But I have been asked twenty, fifty times during the last twelve months, 'Why do you not come out and say something? Why can you not tell us something in this time of our great need?' Well, I reply, 'I told you something when speaking was of use; all I can say now is this, or nearly all,

that a hundred years of crime against the negro in America, and a hundred years of crime against the docile natives of our Indian empire, are not to be washed away by the penitence and the suffering of an hour.'

But what is our position? for you who are subscribing your money here have a right to know. I believe the quantity of cotton in the United States is at this moment much less than many people here believe, and that it is in no condition to be forwarded and exported. And I suspect that it is far more probable than otherwise notwithstanding some of the strange theories of my honourable Colleague, that there never will again be in America a crop of cotton grown by slave labour. You will understand—I hope so, at least—that I am not undertaking the office of prophet, I am not predicting; I know that everything which is not absolutely impossible may happen, and therefore things may happen wholly different to the course which appears to me to be likely. But I say, taking the facts as they are before us—with that most limited vision which is given to mortals—the high probability is that there will never be another considerable crop, or one available for our manufactories, from slave labour in the United States.

We read the American papers, or the quotations from them in our own papers, but I believe we can form no adequate conception of the disorganization and chaos that now prevail throughout a great portion of the Southern States. It is natural to a state of war under the circumstances of society in that region. But then we may be asked, What are our sources of supply, putting aside India? There is the colony of Queensland, where enthusiastic persons tell you cotton can be grown worth 3s. a pound. True enough; but, when labour is probably worth 10s. a-day, I am not sure you are likely to get any large supply of that material we so much want, at a rate so cheap that we shall be likely to use it. Africa is pointed to by a very zealous friend of mine; but Africa is a land of savages, and with its climate so much against European constitutions, I should not entertain the hope that any great relief at any early period can be had from that continent. Egypt will send us 30,000 or 40,000 bales more than last year; in all probability Syria and Brazil, with these high prices, will increase their production to some considerable extent; but I believe there is no country at present from which you can derive any very large supply, except you can get it from your own dependencies in India. Now if there be no more cotton to be grown for two, or three, or four years in America, for our supply, we shall require, considering the smallness of the bales and the loss in working up the cotton—we shall require nearly 6,000,000 of additional bales to be supplied from some source.

I want to put to you one question. It has taken the United States twenty years, from 1840 up to 1860, to increase their growth of cotton from 2,000,000 bales to 4,000,000. How long will it take any other country, with comparatively little capital, with a thousand disadvantages which America did not suffer from—how long will it take any other country, or all other countries, to give us 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 additional bales of cotton? There is one stimulus—the only one that I know of; and although I have not recommended it to the Government, and I know not precisely what sacrifice it would entail, yet I shall mention it, and I do it on the authority of a gentleman to whom I have referred, who is thoroughly acquainted with Indian agriculture, and whose family have been landowners and cultivators in India for sixty years. He says there is only one mode by which you can rapidly stimulate the growth of cotton in India, except that stimulus coming from the high prices for the time being,—he says that, if the Government would make a public declaration that for five years they would exempt from land-tax all land which during

that time shall grow cotton, there would be the most extraordinary increase in the growth of that article which has ever been seen in regard to any branch of agriculture in the world.

I do not know how far that would act, but I believe the stimulus would be enormous, -the loss to the Government in revenue would be something, but the deliverance to the industry of Lancashire, if it succeeded, as my friend thinks, would of course be speedy, and perhaps complete. Short of this, I look upon the restoration of the prosperity of Lancashire as distant. I believe this misfortune may entail ruin upon the whole working population, and that it may gradually engulf the smaller traders and those possessing the least capital. I do not say it will, because, as I have said, what is not impossible may happen,—but it may for years make the whole factory property of Lancashire almost entirely worthless. Well, this is a very dismal look-out for a great many persons in this country; but it comes, as I have said,—it comes from that utter neglect of their opportunities and their duties which has distinguished the Government of India.

Now, Sir, before I sit down I shall ask you to listen to me for a few moments on the other branch of this great question, which refers to that sad tragedy which is passing before our eyes in the United States of America. I shall not, in consequence of anything you have heard from my hon. Friend, conceal from you any of the opinions which I hold, and which I proposed to lay before you if he had not spoken. Having given to him, notwithstanding some diversity of opinion, a fair and candid hearing, I presume that I shall receive the same favour from those who may differ from me. If I had known that my hon. Friend was going to make an elaborate speech on this occasion, one of two things I should have done: I should either have prepared myself entirely to answer him, or I should have decided not to attend a meeting where there could by any possibility of chance have been anything like discord between so many—his friends and my friends—in this room.

Since I have been Member for Birmingham, Mr. Scholefield has treated me with the kindness of a brother. Nothing could possibly be more generous and more disinterested in every way than his conduct towards me during these several years, and therefore I would much rather—far rather—that I lost any opportunity like this of speaking on this question, than I would have come here and appeared to be at variance with him. But I am happy to say that this great question does not depend upon the opinion of any man in Birmingham, or in England, or anywhere else. And therefore I could—anxious always, unless imperative duty requires, to avoid even a semblance of difference —I could with a clear conscience have abstained from coming to and speaking at this meeting.

But I observe that my hon. Friend endeavoured to avoid committing himself to what is called sympathy with the South. He takes a political view of this great question,—is disposed to deal with the matter as he would have dealt with the case of a colony of Spain or Portugal revolting in South America, or of Greece revolting from Turkey. I should like to state here what I once said to an eminent American. He asked me if I could give him an idea of the course of public opinion in this country from the moment we heard of the secession of the Cotton States; and I endeavoured to trace it in this way,—and I ask you to say whether it is a fair and full description.

I said—and my hon. Friend has admitted this—that when the revolt or secession was first announced, people here were generally against the South. Nobody thought then that the South had any cause for breaking up the integrity of that great nation. Their opinion was, and what people said, according to their different politics in this country was, 'They have a Government

which is mild, and not in any degree oppressive; they have not what some people love very much, and what some people dislike,—they have not a costly monarchy, and an aristocracy, creating and living on patronage. They have not an expensive foreign policy; a great army; a great navy; and they have no suffering millions discontented and endeavouring to overthrow their Government;—all which things have been said against Governments in this country and in Europe a hundred times within our own hearing,'—and therefore, they said, 'Why should these men revolt?'

But for a moment the Washington Government appeared paralyzed. It had no army and no navy; everybody was traitor to it. It was paralyzed and apparently helpless; and in the hour when the government was transferred from President Buchanan to President Lincoln, many people—such was the unprepared state of the North, such was the apparent paralysis of everything there—thought there would be no war; and men shook hands with each other pleasantly, and congratulated themselves that the disaster of a great strife, and the mischief to our own trade, might be avoided. That was the opinion at that moment, so far as I can recollect, and could gather at the time, with my opportunities of gathering such opinion. They thought the North would acquiesce in the rending of the Republic, and that there would be no war.

Well, but there was another reason. They were told by certain public writers in this country that the contest was entirely hopeless, as they have been told lately by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am very happy that, though the Chancellor of the Exchequer is able to decide to a penny what shall be the amount of taxes to meet public expenditure in England, he cannot decide what shall be the fate of a whole continent. It was said that the contest was hopeless, and why should the North continue a contest at so much loss of blood and treasure, and at so great a loss to the commerce of the whole world? If a man thought—if a man believed in his heart that the contest was absolutely hopeless—no man in this country had probably any right to form a positive opinion one way or the other—but if he had formed that opinion, he might think, 'Well, the North can never be successful; it would be much better that they should not carry on the war at all; and therefore I am rather glad that the South should have success, for by that the war will be the sooner put an end to.' I think this was a feeling that was abroad.

Now I am of opinion that, if we judge a foreign nation in the circumstances in which we find America, we ought to apply to it our own principles. My hon. Friend has referred to the question of the *Trent*. I was not here last year, but I heard of a meeting—I read in the papers of a meeting held in reference to that affair in this very hall, and that there was a great diversity of opinion. But the majority were supposed to indorse the policy of the Government in making a great demonstration of force. And I think I read that at least one minister of religion took that view from this platform. I am not complaining of it. But I say that if you thought when the American captain, even if he had acted under the commands of his Government, which he had not, had taken two men most injurious and hostile to his country from the deck of an English ship—if you thought that on that ground you were justified in going to war with the Republic of North America, then I say you ought not to be very nice in judging what America should do in circumstances much more onerous than those in which you were placed.

Now, take as an illustration the Rock of Gibraltar. Many of you have been there, I dare say. I have; and among the things that interested me were the monkeys on the top of it, and a good many people at the bottom, who were living on English taxes. Well, the Rock of Gibraltar was taken and retained by this country when we were not at

war with Spain, and it was retained contrary to every law of morality and honour. [A Voice: 'No! No!'] No doubt the Gentleman below is much better acquainted with the history of it than I am, but I may suggest to him that very likely we have read two different histories. But I will let this pass, and I will assume that it came into the possession of England in the most honourable way, which is, I suppose, by regular and acknowledged national warfare.

Suppose, at this moment, you heard, or the English Government heard, that Spain was equipping expeditions, by land and sea, for the purpose of retaking that fortress and rock. Now, although it is not of the slightest advantage to any Englishman living, excepting to those who have pensions and occupations upon it; although every Government knows it, and although more than one Government has been anxious to give it up, and I hope this Government will send my friend, Mr. Cobden, to Madrid, with an offer that Gibraltar shall be ceded to Spain, as being of no use to this country, and only embittering, as statesmen have admitted, the relations between Spain and England,—and if he were to go to Madrid with an offer of the Rock of Gibraltar, I believe he might obtain a commercial treaty with Spain, that would admit every English manufacture and every article of English produce into that country at a duty of not more than ten per cent.;—I say, do you not think that, if you heard that Spain was about to retake that useless rock, mustering her legions and her fleets, the English Government would combine all the power of this country to resist it?

If that be so, then I think—seeing that there was a fair election two years ago, and that President Lincoln was fairly and honestly elected—that when the Southern leaders met at Montgomery in Alabama, on the 6th of March, and authorized the raising of a hundred thousand men, and when, on the 15th of April, they attacked Fort Sumter—not a fort of South Carolina, but a fort of the Union—then, upon all the principles that Englishmen and English Governments have ever acted upon, President Lincoln was justified in calling out seventy-five thousand men—which was his first call—for the purpose of maintaining the integrity of that nation, which was the main purpose of the oath which he had taken at his election.

Now I shall not go into a long argument upon this question, for the reason that a year ago I said what I thought it necessary to say upon it, and because I believe the question is in the hand, not of my hon. Friend, nor in that of Lord Palmerston, nor in that even of President Lincoln, but it is in the hand of the Supreme Ruler, who is bringing about one of those great transactions in history which men often will not regard when they are passing before them, but which they look back upon with awe and astonishment some years after they are past. So I shall content myself with asking one or two questions. I shall not discuss the question whether the North is making war for the Constitution, or making war for the abolition of slavery.

If you come to a matter of sympathy with the South, or recognition of the South, or mediation or intervention for the benefit of the South, you should consider what are the ends of the South. Surely the United States' Government is a Government at amity with this country. Its Minister is in London—a man honourable by family, as you know, in America, his father and his grandfather having held the office of President of the Republic. You have your own Minister just returned to Washington. Is this hypocrisy? Are you, because you can cavil at certain things which the North, the United States' Government, has done or has not done, are you eagerly to throw the influence of your opinion into a movement which is to dismember the great Republic?

Is there a man here that doubts for a moment that the object of the war on

the part of the South—they began the war—that the object of the war on the part of the South is to maintain in bondage four millions of human beings? That is only a small part of it. The further object is to perpetuate for ever the bondage of all the posterity of those four millions of slaves. [A few cries of 'No! No!'] You will hear that I am not in a condition to contest vigorously anything that may be opposed, for I am suffering, as nearly everybody is, from the state of the weather, and a hoarseness that almost hinders me from speaking. I could quote their own documents till midnight in proof of what I say; and if I found a man who denied it, upon the evidence that had been offered, I would not offend him, or trouble myself by trying further to convince him.

The object is, that a handful of white men on that continent shall lord it over many millions of blacks, made black by the very Hand that made us white. The object is, that they should have the power to breed negroes, to work negroes, to lash negroes, to chain negroes, to buy and sell negroes, to deny them the commonest ties of family, or to break their hearts by rending them at their pleasure, to close their mental eye to but a glimpse even of that knowledge which separates us from the brute—for in their laws it is criminal and penal to teach the negro to read—to seal from their hearts the Book of our religion, and to make chattels and things of men and women and children.

Now I want to ask whether this is to be the foundation, as it is proposed, of a new slave empire, and whether it is intended that on this audacious and infernal basis England's new ally is to be built up. It has been said that Greece was recognized, and that other countries had been recognized. But Greece was not recognized till after she had fought Turkey for six years, and the Republics of South America, some of them, not till they had fought the mother country for a score of years. France did not recognize the United States of America till some, I think, six years, five certainly, after the beginning of the War of Independence, and even then it was received as a declaration of war by the English Government. I want to know who they are who speak eagerly in favour of England becoming the ally and friend of this great conspiracy against human nature.

Now I should have no kind of objection to recognize a country because it was a country that held slaves—to recognize the United States, or to be in amity with it. The question of slavery there, and in Cuba and in Brazil, is, as far as respects the present generation, an accident, and it would be unreasonable that we should object to trade with and have political relations with a country, merely because it happened to have within its borders the institution of slavery, hateful as that institution is. But in this case it is a new State intending to set itself up on the sole basis of slavery. Slavery is blasphemously declared to be its chief corner-stone.

I have heard that there are, in this country, ministers of state who are in favour of the South; that there are members of the aristocracy who are terrified at the shadow of the Great Republic; that there are rich men on our commercial exchanges, depraved, it may be, by their riches, and thriving unwholesomely within the atmosphere of a privileged class; that there are conductors of the public press who would barter the rights of millions of their fellow-creatures that they might bask in the smiles of the great.

But I know that there are ministers of state who do not wish that this insurrection should break up the American nation; that there are members of our aristocracy who are not afraid of the shadow of the Republic; that there are rich men, many, who are not depraved by their riches; and that there are public writers of eminence and honour who will not barter human rights for the patronage of the great. But most of all, and before all, I believe,—I am sure it is true in Lanca-

shire, where the working men have seen themselves coming down from prosperity to ruin, from independence to a subsistence on charity,—I say that I believe that the unenfranchised but not hopeless millions of this country will never sympathize with a revolt which is intended to destroy the liberty of a continent, and to build on its ruins a mighty fabric of human bondage.

When I speak to gentlemen in private upon this matter, and hear their own candid opinion,—I mean those who differ from me on this question,—they generally end by saying that the Republic is too great and too powerful, and that it is better for us—not by 'us' meaning you, but the governing classes and the governing policy of England—that it should be broken up. But we will suppose that we are in New York or in Boston, discussing the policy and power of England. If any one there were to point to England,—not to the thirty-one millions of population in these islands, but to her one hundred and fifty millions in India, and nobody knows how many millions more in every other part of the globe,—might he not, whilst boasting that America has not covered the ocean with fleets of force, or left the bones of her citizens to blanch on a hundred European battle-fields,—might he not fairly say, that England is great and powerful, and that it is perilous for the world that she is so great?

But bear in mind that every declaration of this kind, whether from an Englishman who professes to be strictly English, or from an American strictly American, or from a Frenchman strictly French,—whether it asserts in arrogant strains that Britannia rules the waves, or speaks of 'manifest destiny' and the supremacy of the 'Stars and Stripes,' or boasts that the Eagles of one nation, having once overrun Europe, may possibly repeat the experiment,—I say all this is to be condemned. It is not truly patriotic; it is not rational; it is not moral. Then, I say, if any man wishes the Great Republic to be severed on that ground: in my opinion, he is doing that which tends to keep alive jealousies which, as far as he can prevent it, will never die; though if they do not die, wars must be eternal.

But then I shall be told that the people of the North do not like us at all. In fact, we have heard it to-night. It is not reasonable that they should like us. If an American be in this room to-night, will he feel that he likes my honourable Friend? But if the North does not like England, does anybody believe the South does? It does not appear to me to be a question of liking or disliking. Everybody knows that when the South was in power,—and it has been in power for the last fifty years,—everybody knows that hostility to this country, wherever it existed in America, was cherished and stimulated to the utmost degree by some of those very men who are now leaders of this very insurrection.

My hon. Friend read a passage about the *Alabama*. I undertake to say that he is not acquainted with the facts about the *Alabama*. That he will acknowledge, I think. The Government of this country have admitted that the building of the *Alabama*, and her sailing from the Mersey, was a violation of international law. In America they say, and they say here, that the *Alabama* is a ship of war; that she was built in the Mersey; that she was built, and I have reason to believe it, by a member of the British Parliament; that she is furnished with guns of English manufacture; that she is manned almost entirely by Englishmen; and that these facts were represented, as I know they were represented, to the collector of customs in Liverpool, who pooh-poohed them, and said there was nothing in them. He was requested to send the facts up to London to the Customs' authorities, and their solicitor, not a very wise man, but probably in favour of breaking up the Republic, did not think them of much consequence; but afterwards the opinion of an eminent counsel, Mr. Collier, the Member for Plymouth, was

taken, and he stated distinctly that what was being done in Liverpool was a direct infringement of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and that the Customs' authorities of Liverpool would be responsible for anything that happened in consequence.

When this opinion was taken to the Foreign Office, the Foreign Office was a little astonished and a little troubled; and after they had consulted their own law officers, whose opinions agreed with that of Mr. Collier, they did what Government officers generally do, and as promptly,—a telegraphic message went down to Liverpool to order that this vessel should be seized, and she happened to sail an hour or two before the message arrived. She has never been into a Confederate port—they have not got any ports; she hoists the English flag when she wants to come alongside a ship; she sets a ship on fire in the night, and when, seeing fire, another ship bears down to lend help, she seizes it, and pillages and burns it. I think that, if we were citizens of New York, it would require a little more calmness than is shown in this country to look at all this as if it was a matter with which we had no concern. And therefore I do not so much blame the language that has been used in America in reference to the question of the *Alabama*.

But they do not know in America so much as we know—the whole truth about public opinion here. There are ministers in our Cabinet as resolved to be no traitors to freedom, on this question, as I am; and there are members of the English aristocracy, and in the very highest rank, as I know for a certainty, who hold the same opinion. They do not know in America—at least, there has been no indication of it until the advices that have come to hand within the last two days—what is the opinion of the great body of the working classes in England. There has been every effort that money *malice could make to stimulate in* cashire, amongst the suffering ed

tion, an expression of opinion in favo of the Slave States. They have n been able to get it. And I honour th population for their fidelity to prin ples and to freedom, and I say that t course they have taken ought to ato in the minds of the people of the Unit States for miles of leading articles, wr ten by the London press,—by men wl would barter every human right,—th they might serve the party with whi they are associated.

But now I shall ask you one oth question before I sit down,—Hc comes it that on the Continent there not a liberal newspaper, nor a liber politician, that has said, or has thoug of saying, a word in favour of this pc tentous and monstrous shape which no asks to be received into the family nations? Take the great Italian Mini ter, Count Cavour. You read son time ago in the papers part of a de patch which he wrote on the questic of America—he had no difficulty deciding. Ask Garibaldi. Is there Europe a more disinterested and ge nerous friend of freedom than Gar baldi? Ask that illustrious Hungaria to whose marvellous eloquence yo once listened in this hall. Will he te you that slavery has nothing to do wit it, and that the slaveholders of th South will liberate the negroes soone than the North through the instru mentality of the war? Ask Victo Hugo, the poet of freedom,—the expo nent, may I not call him, of the yearn ings of all mankind for a better time Ask any man in Europe who opens hi lips for freedom,—who dips his pen i ink that he may indite a sentence fo freedom,—whoever has a sym ...nie- freedom warm in his ...embers of him,—he will ... are not afraid of telling ... Republic; that there path... ...en, many, who are not de- ...y their riches; and that there public writers of eminence and ...onour who will not barter human rights for the patronage of the great. But most of all, and before all, I believe,—I am sure it is true in Lanca-

is not true of Germany only, it is true of all the world except this island, famed for freedom, in which we dwell. I will tell you what is the reason. Our London press is mainly in the hands of certain ruling West End classes; it acts and writes in favour of those classes. I will tell you what they mean. One of the most eminent statesmen in this country, —one who has rendered the greatest services to the country, though, I must say, not in an official capacity, in which men very seldom confer such great advantages upon the country,—he told me twice, at an interval of several months, 'I had no idea how much influence the example of that Republic was having upon opinion here, until I discovered the universal congratulation that the Republic was likely to be broken up.'

But, Sir, the Free States are the home of the working man. Now, I speak to working men particularly at this moment. Do you know that in fifteen years two million five hundred thousand persons, men, women, and children, have left the United Kingdom to find a home in the Free States of America? That is a population equal to eight great cities of the size of Birmingham. What would you think of eight Birminghams being transplanted from this country and set down in the United States? Speaking generally, every man of these two and a half millions is in a position of much higher comfort and prosperity than he would have been if he had remained in this country. I say it is the home of the working man; as one of her poets has recently said,—

French,—.. her free latch-string never was
strains that B...
or speaks of 'manifest child of Adam's
supremacy of the 'Stars and ...
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sibly repeat the experiment,—I say all this is to be condemned. It is not truly patriotic; it is not rational; it is not moral. Then, I say, if any man wishes the Great Republic to be severed on

vote, and a free career for the child of the humblest born in the land. My countrymen who work for your living, remember this: there will be one wild shriek of freedom to startle all mankind if that American Republic should be overthrown.

Now for one moment let us lift ourselves, if we can, above the narrow circle in which we are all too apt to live and think; let us put ourselves on an historical eminence, and judge this matter fairly. Slavery has been, as we all know, the huge, foul blot upon the fame of the American Republic; it is a hideous outrage against human right and against Divine law; but the pride, the passion of man, will not permit its peaceable extinction. The slave-owners of our colonies, if they had been strong enough, would have revolted too. I believe there was no mode short of a miracle more stupendous than any recorded in Holy Writ that could in our time, or in a century, or in any time, have brought about the abolition of slavery in America, but the suicide which the South has committed and the war which it has begun.

Sir, it is a measureless calamity,—this war. I said the Russian war was a measureless calamity, and yet many of your leaders and friends told you that it was a just war to maintain the integrity of Turkey, some thousands of miles off. Surely the integrity of your own country at your own doors must be worth as much as the integrity of Turkey. Is not this war the penalty which inexorable justice exacts from America, North and South, for the enormous guilt of cherishing that frightful iniquity of slavery for the last eighty years? I do not blame any man here who thinks the cause of the North hopeless and the restoration of the Union impossible. It may be hopeless; the restoration may be impossible. You have the authority of the Chancellor of the ...chequer on that point. The Chan-
mu... of the Exchequer, as a speaker, is opini...assed by any man in England, Collier, ... great statesman; he believes

the cause of the North to be hopeless; that their enterprise cannot succeed.

Well, he is quite welcome to that opinion, and so is anybody else. I do not hold the opinion; but the facts are before us all, and, as far as we can discard passion and sympathy, we are all equally at liberty to form our own opinion. But what I do blame is this. I blame men who are eager to admit into the family of nations a State which offers itself to us, based upon a principle, I will undertake to say, more odious and more blasphemous than was ever heretofore dreamed of in Christian or Pagan, in civilized or in savage times. The leaders of this revolt propose this monstrous thing—that over a territory forty times as large as England, the blight and curse of slavery shall be for ever perpetuated.

I cannot believe, for my part, that such a fate will befall that fair land, stricken though it now is with the ravages of war. I cannot believe that civilization, in its journey with the sun, will sink into endless night in order to gratify the ambition of the leaders of this revolt, who seek to

'Wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.'

I have another and a far brighter vision before my gaze. It may be but a vision, but I will cherish it. I see one vast confederation stretching from the frozen North in unbroken line to the glowing South, and from the wild billows of the Atlantic westward to the calmer waters of the Pacific main,—and I see one people, and one language, and one law, and one faith, and, over all that wide continent, the home of freedom, and a refuge for the oppressed of every race and of every clime.

AMERICA.

III.

SLAVERY AND SECESSION.

ROCHDALE, FEBRUARY 3, 1863.

[This speech was delivered at a public meeting held in the Public Hall, Rochdale, for the purpose of passing a resolution of thanks to the merchants of New York, for their generous contributions to the relief of the suffering population of the cotton districts.]

I FEEL as if we were in our places to-night, for we are met for the purpose of considering, and, I doubt not, of agreeing to a resolution expressive of our sense of the generosity of the merchants of New York, and other citizens of the United States, who have, in the midst of so many troubles and such great sacrifices, contributed to the relief of that appalling distress which has prevailed, and does still prevail, in this county.

I regard this transmission of assistance from the United States as a proof that the world moves onward in the direction of a better time. It is an evidence that, whatever may be the faults of ambitious men, and sometimes, may I not say, the crimes of Governments, the peoples are drawing together, and beginning to learn that it never was intended that they should be hostile to each other, but that every nation should take a brotherly interest in every other nation in the world. There has been, as we all know, not a little jealousy between some portions of the people of this country and some portions of the people of the United States. Perhaps the jealousy has existed more on this side. I think it has found more expression here, probably through the means of the public press, than has been the case with them. I am not alluding now to the last two years, but as long as most of us have been readers of newspapers and observers of what has passed around us.

The establishment of independence, eighty years ago; the war of 1812; it may be, occasionally, the presumptuousness and the arrogance of a growing and prosperous nation on the other side of the Atlantic—these things have stimulated ill feeling and jealousy here, which have often found expression in language which has not been of the very kindest character. But why should there be this jealousy between these two nations? Mr Ashworth has said, and said very truly, 'Are they not our own people?' I should think, as an Englishman, that to see that people so numerous, so powerful, so great in so many ways, should be to us a cause, not of envy or of fear, but rather of glory and rejoicing.

I have never visited the United States,

but I can understand the pleasure with which an Englishman lands in a country three thousand miles off, and finds that every man he meets speaks his own language. I recollect some years ago reading a most amusing speech delivered by a Suffolk country gentleman, at a Suffolk agricultural dinner, I think it was, though I do not believe the speeches of Suffolk country gentlemen at Suffolk agricultural meetings are generally very amusing. But this was a very amusing speech. This gentleman had travelled; he had been in the United States, and being intelligent enough to admire much that he saw there, he gave to his audience a description of some things that he had seen; but that which seemed to delight him most was this, that when he stepped from the steamer on to the quay at New York, he found that 'everybody spoke Suffolk.' Now, if anybody from this neighbourhood should visit New York, I am afraid that he will not find everybody speaking Lancashire. Our dialect, as you know, is vanishing into the past. It will be preserved to future times, partly in the works of Tim Bobbin, but in a very much better and more instructive form in the admirable writings of one of my oldest and most valued friends, who is now upon this platform. But if we should not find the people of New York speaking Lancashire, we should find them speaking English. And if we followed a little further, and asked them what they read, we should find that they read all the books that we read that are worth reading, and a good many of their own, some of which have not yet reached us; that there are probably more readers in the United States of Milton, and Shakespeare, and Dryden, and Pope, and Byron, and Wordsworth, and Tennyson, than are to be found in this country: because, I think, it will probably be admitted by everybody who understands the facts of both countries, that out of the twenty millions of population in the Free States of America, there are more persons who can read well than there are in the thirty millions of population of Great Britain and Ireland.

And if we leave their literature and turn to their laws, we shall find that their laws have the same basis as ours, and that many of the great and memorable judgments of our greatest judges and lawyers are of high authority with them. If we come to that priceless possession which we have perhaps more clearly established than any other people in Europe, that of personal freedom, we shall find that in the Free States of America personal freedom is as much known, as well established, as fully appreciated, and as completely enjoyed as it is now in this country. And if we come to the form of their government, we shall find that it is in its principle, in its essence, not very dissimilar from that which our Constitution professes in this kingdom. The difference is this, that our Constitution has never yet been fully enjoyed by the people; the House in which forty-eight hours hence I may be sitting, is not as full and fair and free a representation of the people as is the House of Representatives that assembles at Washington. But, if there be differences, are there not great points of agreement, and are there any of these differences that justify us or them in regarding either nations as foreign or hostile?

Now, the people of Europe owe much more than they are often aware of to the Constitution of the United States of America, and to the existence of that great Republic. The United States have been in point of fact an ark of refuge to the people of Europe, when fleeing from the storms and the revolutions of the old continent. They have been, as far as the artisans and labouring population of this country are concerned, a life-boat to them; and they have saved hundreds of thousands of men and of families from disastrous shipwreck. The existence of that free country and that free government has had a prodigious influence upon freedom in Europe and in England. If you could have before you a chart of the

condition of Europe when the United States became a nation, and another chart of the condition of Europe now, you would see the difference, the enormous stride which has been made in Europe; and you may rely upon it that not a little of it has been occasioned by the influence of the great example of that country, free in its political institutions beyond all other countries, and yet maintaining its course in peace, preserving order, and conferring upon all its people a degree of prosperity which in these old countries is as yet unknown.

I should like now to speak specially to the working men who are here, who have no capital but their skill and their industry and their bodily strength. In fifteen years from 1845 to 1860—and this is a fact which I stated in this room more than a year ago, when speaking on the question of America, but it is a fact which every working man ought to have in his mind always when he is considering what America is—in fifteen years there have emigrated to the United States from Great Britain and Ireland not less than two million four hundred thousand persons. Millions are easily spoken, not easily counted, with great difficulty comprehended; but the twenty-four hundred thousand persons that I have described means a population equal to not less than sixty towns, every one of them of the size and population of Rochdale. And every one of these men who have emigrated, as he crossed the Atlantic—if he went by steam, in a fortnight, and if he went by sails, in a month or five weeks—found himself in a country where to his senses a vast revolution had taken place, comprehending all that men anticipate from any kind of revolution that shall advance political and social equality in their own land—a revolution which commenced in the War of Independence, which has been going on, and which has been confirmed by all that has transpired in subsequent years.

He does not find that he belongs to what are called the 'lower classes;' he is not shut out from any of the rights of citizenship; he is admitted to the full enjoyment of all political privileges, as far as they are extended to any portion of the population; and he has there advantages which the people of this country have not yet gained, because we are but gradually making our way out of the darkness and the errors and the tyrannies of past ages. But in America he finds the land not cursed with feudalism; it is free to every man to buy and sell, and possess and transmit. He finds in the town in which he lives that the noblest buildings are the school-houses to which his children are freely admitted. And among those twenty millions—for I am now confining my observations to the Free States—the son of every man has easy admission to school, has fair opportunity for improvement; and, if God has gifted him with power of head and of heart, there is nothing of usefulness, nothing of greatness, nothing of success in that country to which he may not fairly aspire.

And, Sir, this makes a difference between that country and this, on which I must say another word. One of the most painful things to my mind to be seen in England is this, that amongst the great body of those classes which earn their living by their daily labour—it is particularly observable in the agricultural districts, and it is too much to be observed even in our own districts—there is an absence of that hope which every man ought to have in his soul that there is for him, if he be industrious and frugal, a comfortable independence as he advances in life. In the United States that hope prevails everywhere, because everywhere there is an open career; there is no privileged class; there is complete education extended to all, and every man feels that he was not born to be in penury and in suffering, but that there is no point in the social ladder to which he may not fairly hope to raise himself by his honest efforts.

Well, looking at all this—and I have

but touched on some very prominent facts—I should say that it offers to us every motive, not for fear, not for jealousy, not for hatred, but rather for admiration, gratitude, and friendship. I am persuaded of this as much as I am of anything that I know or believe, that the more perfect the friendship that is established between the people of England and the free people of America, the more you will find your path of progress here made easy for you, and the more will social and political liberty advance amongst us.

But this country which I have been in part describing is now the scene of one of the greatest calamities that can afflict mankind. After seventy years of almost uninterrupted peace, it has become the scene of a civil war, more gigantic, perhaps, than any that we have any record of with regard to any other nation or any other people; for the scene of this warfare is so extended as to embrace a region almost equal in size to the whole of Europe. At this very moment military operations are being undertaken at points as distant from each other as Madrid is distant from Moscow. But this great strife cannot have arisen amongst an educated and intelligent people without some great and overruling cause. Let us for a moment examine that cause, and let us ask ourselves whether it is possible at such a time to stand neutral in regard to the contending parties, and to refuse our sympathy to one or the other of them. I find men sometimes who profess a strict neutrality; they wish neither the one thing nor the other. This arises either from the fact that they are profoundly ignorant with regard to this matter, or else that they sympathise with the South, but are rather ashamed to admit it.

There are two questions concerned in this struggle. Hitherto, generally, one only has been discussed. There is the question whether negro slavery shall continue to be upheld amongst Christian nations, or whether it shall be entirely abolished. Because, bear in mind that if the result of the struggle that is now proceeding in America should abolish slavery within the territories of the United States, then soon after slavery in Brazil, and slavery in Cuba, will also fall. I was speaking the other day to a gentleman well acquainted with Cuban affairs; he is often in the habit of seeing persons who come from Cuba to this country on business; and I asked him what his Cuban friends said of what was going on in America. He said, 'They speak of it with the greatest apprehension: all the property of Cuba,' he said, 'is based on slavery; and they say that if slavery comes to an end in America, as they believe it will, through this war, slavery will have a very short life in Cuba.' Therefore, the question which is being now tried is, not merely whether four millions of slaves in America shall be free, but whether the vast number of slaves (I know not the number) in Cuba and Brazil shall also be liberated.

But there is another question besides that of the negro, and which to you whom I am now addressing is scarcely less important. I say that the question of freedom to men of all races is deeply involved in this great strife in the United States. I said I wanted the working men of this audience to listen to my statement, because it is to them that I particularly wish to address myself. I say, that not only is the question of negro slavery concerned in this struggle, but, if we are to take the opinion of leading writers and men in the Southern States of America, the freedom of white men is not safe in their hands. Now, I will not trouble you with pages of extracts which would confirm all that I am about to say, but I shall read you two or three short ones which will explain exactly what I mean.

The city of Richmond, as you know, is the capital of what is called the Southern Confederacy. In that city a newspaper is published, called the *Richmond Examiner*, which is one of the most able, and perhaps about the most influential, paper published in the

Slave States. Listen to what the *Richmond Examiner* says:—

'The experiment of universal liberty has failed. The evils of free society are insufferable. Free society in the long run is impracticable; it is everywhere starving, demoralizing, and insurrectionary. Policy and humanity alike forbid the extension of its evils to new peoples and to coming generations; and therefore free society must fall and give way to a slave society—a social system old as the world, universal as man.'

Well, on another occasion, the same paper treats the subject in this way. The writer says:—

'Hitherto the defence of slavery has encountered great difficulties, because its apologists stopped half way. They confined the defence of slavery to negro slavery alone, abandoning the principle of slavery, and admitting that every other form of slavery was wrong. Now the line of defence is changed. The South maintains that slavery is just, natural, and necessary, and that it does not depend on the difference of complexions.'

But following up this is an extract from a speech by a Mr. Cobb, who is an eminent man in Southern politics and in Southern opinion. He says:—

'There is, perhaps, no solution of the great problem of reconciling the interests of labour and capital, so as to protect each from the encroachments and oppressions of the other, so simple and effective as negro slavery. By making the labourer himself capital, the conflict ceases, and the interests become identical.'

Now, I do not know whether there is any working man here who does not fully or partly realize the meaning of those extracts. They mean this, that if a man in this neighbourhood (for they pity us very much in our benighted condition as regards capital and labour, and they have an admirable way, from their view, of putting an end to strikes)—they say that, if a man in this neighbourhood had ten thousand pounds sterling in a cotton or woollen factory, and he employed a hundred men, women, and children, that instead of paying them whatever wages had been agreed upon, allowing them to go to the other side of the town, and work where they liked, or to move to another county, or to emigrate to America, or to have any kind of will or wish whatever with regard to their own disposal, that they should be to him capital, just the same as the horses are in his stable; that he should sell the husband South,—'South' in America means something very dreadful to the negro,—that he should sell the wife if he liked, that he should sell the children, that, in point of fact, he should do whatsoever he liked with them, and that, if any one of them resisted any punishment which the master chose to inflict, the master should be held justified if he beat his slave to death; and that not one of those men should have the power to give evidence in any court of justice, in any case, against a white man, however much he might have suffered from that white man.

You will observe that this most important paper in the South writes for that principle, and this eminent Southern politician indorses it, and thinks it a cure for all the evils which exist in the Old World and in the Northern and Free States; and there is not a paper in the South, nor is there a man as eminent or more eminent than Mr. Cobb, who has dared to write or speak in condemnation of the atrocity of that language. I believe this great strife to have had its origin in an infamous conspiracy against the rights of human nature. Those principles, which they distinctly avow and proclaim, are not to be found, as far as I know, in the pages of any heathen writer of old times, nor are they to be discovered in the teachings or the practice of savage nations in our times. It is the doctrine of devils, and not of men; and all mankind should shudder at the enormity of the guilt which the leaders of this conspiracy have brought upon that country.

Now, let us look at two or three facts, which seem to me very remarkable, on the surface of the case, but which there are men in this country, and I am told they may be found even in this town, who altogether ignore and deny. The war was not commenced by those to whom your resolution refers; it was commenced by the South; they rebelled against the majority. It was not a rebellion against a monarchy, or an aristocracy, or some other form of government which has its hold upon people, sometimes by services, but often from tradition; but it was against a Government of their own, and a compact of their own, that they violently rebelled, and for the expressed and avowed purpose of maintaining the institution of slavery, and for the purpose, not disavowed, of re-opening the slave trade, and, as these extracts show, if their principles should be fully carried out, of making bondage universal among all classes of labourers and artisans. When I say that their object was to re-open the slave trade, do not for a moment imagine that I am overstating the case against them. They argue, with a perfect logic, that, if slavery was right, the slave trade could not be wrong; if the slave trade be wrong, slavery cannot be right; and that if it be lawful and moral to go to the State of Virginia and buy a slave for two thousand dollars, and take him to Louisiana, it cannot be wrong to go to Africa, and buy a slave for fifty dollars, and take him to Louisiana. That was their argument; it is an argument to this day, and is an argument that in my opinion no man can controvert; and the lawful existence of slavery is as a matter of course to be followed, and would be followed, wherever there was the power, by the re-opening of the traffic in negroes from Africa.

That is not all these people have done. Reference has been made, in the resolution and in the speeches, to the distress which prevails in this district, and you are told, and have been told over and over again, that all this distress has arisen from the blockade of the ports of the Southern States. There is at least one great port from which in past times two millions of bales of cotton a-year have found their way to Europe —the port of New Orleans—which is blockaded; and the United States' Government has proclaimed that any cotton that is sent from the interior to New Orleans for shipment, although it belongs to persons in arms against the Government, shall yet be permitted to go to Europe, and they shall receive unmolested the proceeds of the sale of that cotton. But still the cotton does not come. The reason why it does not come is, not because it would do harm to the United States' Government for it to come, or that it would in any way assist the United States' Government in carrying on the war. The reason that it does not come is, because its being kept back is supposed to be a way of influencing public opinion in England and the course of the English Government in reference to the American war. They burn the cotton that they may injure us, and they injure us because they think that we cannot live even for a year without their cotton; and that to get it we should send ships of war, break the blockade, make war upon the North, and assist the slave-owners to maintain, or to obtain, their independence.

Now, with regard to the question of American cotton, one or two extracts will be sufficient; but I could give you a whole pamphlet of them, if it were necessary. Mr. Mann, an eminent person in the State of Georgia, says:—

'With the failure of the cotton, England fails. Stop her supply of Southern slave-grown cotton, and her factories stop, her commerce stops, the healthful normal circulation of her life-blood stops.'

Again he says:—

'In one year from the stoppage of England's supply of Southern slave-grown cotton, the Chartists would be in all her streets and fields, revolution would be

rampant throughout the island, and nothing that is would exist.'

He also says, addressing an audience:—

'Why, Sirs, British lords hold their lands, British bishops hold their revenues, Victoria holds her sceptre, by the grace of cotton, as surely as by the grace of God.'

Senator Wigfall says:—

'If we stop the supply of cotton for one week, England would be starving. Queen Victoria's crown would not stand on her head one week, if the supply of cotton was stopped; nor would her head stand on her shoulders.'

Mr. Stephens, who is the Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy, says:—

'There will be revolution in Europe, there will be starvation there; our cotton is the element that will do it.'

Now, I am not stating the mere result of any discovery of my own, but it would be impossible to read the papers of the South, or the speeches made in the South, before, and at the time of, and after the secession, without seeing that the universal opinion there was, that the stoppage of the supply of cotton would be our instantaneous ruin, and that if they could only lay hold of it, keep it back in the country, or burn it, so that it never could be used, that then the people of Lancashire, merchants, manufacturers, and operatives in mills—everybody dependent upon this vast industry—would immediately arise and protest against the English Government abstaining for one moment from the recognition of the South, from war with the North, and from a resolution to do the utmost that we could to create a slave-holding independent republic in the South.

And these very men who have been wishing to drag us into a war that would have covered us with everlasting infamy, have sent their envoys to this country, Mr. Yancey, Mr. Mann (I do not know whether or not the same Mr. Mann to whom I have been referring), and Mr. Mason, the author of the Fugitive Slave Law. These men have been in this country,—one of them I believe is here now,—envoys sent to offer friendship to the Queen of England, to be received at her Court, and to make friends with the great men in London. They come,—I have seen them under the gallery of the House of Commons; I have seen Members of the House shaking hands with them and congratulating them, if there has been some military success on their side, and receiving them as if they were here from the most honourable Government, and with the most honourable mission. Why, the thing which they have broken off from the United States to maintain, is felony by your law. They are not only slave owners, slave buyers and sellers, but that which out of Pandemonium itself was never before conceived,—they are slave breeders for the slave market; and these men have come to your country, and are to be met with at elegant tables in London, and are in fast friendship with some of your public men, and are constantly found in some of your newspaper offices; and they are here to ask Englishmen—Englishmen with a history of freedom—to join hands with their atrocious conspiracy.

I regret more than I have words to express this painful fact, that of all the countries in Europe this country is the only one which has men in it who are willing to take active steps in favour of this intended slave government. We supply the ships; we supply the arms, the munitions of war; we give aid and comfort to this foulest of all crimes. Englishmen only do it. I believe you have not seen a single statement in the newspapers that any French, or Belgian, or Dutch, or Russian ship has been engaged in, or seized whilst attempting to violate the blockade and to carry arms to the South. They are English Liberal newspapers only which support this stupendous iniquity. They are English statesmen only, who profess to be liberal, who have said a word

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to favour the authors of this now-enacting revolution in America.

The other day, not a week since, a member of the present Government,—he is not a statesman—he is the son of a great statesman, and occupies the position of Secretary for Ireland,—he dared to say to an English audience that he wished the Republic to be divided, and that the South should become an independent State. If that island which—I suppose in punishment for some of its offences—has been committed to his care,—if that island were to attempt to secede, not to set up a slave kingdom, but a kingdom more free than it has ever yet been, the Government of which he is a member would sack its cities and drench its soil with blood before they would allow such a kingdom to be established.

But the working men of England, and I will say it too for the great body of the middle classes of England, have not been wrong upon this great question. As for you,—men labouring from morn till night that you may honourably and honestly maintain your families, and the independence of your households,—you are too slowly emerging from a condition of things far from independent—far from free—for you to have sympathy with this fearful crime which I have been describing. You come, as it were, from bonds yourselves, and you can sympathize with them who are still in bondage.

See that meeting that was held in Manchester a month ago, in the Free Trade Hall, of five or six thousand men. See the address which they there carried unanimously to the President of the United States. See that meeting held the other night in Exeter Hall, in London; that vast room, the greatest room, I suppose, in the Metropolis, filled so much that its overflowings filled another large room in the same building, and when that was full, the further overflowings filled the street; and in both rooms, and in the street, speeches were made on this great question. But what is said by the writers in this infamous Southern press in this country with regard to that meeting? Who was there? 'A gentleman who who had written a novel, and two or three Dissenting ministers.' I shall not attempt any defence of those gentlemen. What they do, they do openly, in the face of day; and if they utter sentiments on this question, it is from a public platform, with thousands of their countrymen gazing into their faces. These men who slander them write behind a mask,—and, what is more, they dare not tell in the open day that which they write in the columns of their journal. But if it be true that there is nothing in the writer of a successful novel, or in two or three pious and noble-minded Dissenting ministers, to collect a great audience, what does it prove if there was a great audience? It only proves that they were not collected by the reputation of any orator who was expected to address them, but by their cordial and ardent sympathy for the great cause which was pleaded before them.

Everybody now that I meet says to me, 'Public opinion seems to have undergone a considerable change.' The fact is, people do not know very much about America. They are learning more every day. They have been greatly misled by what are called 'the best public instructors.' Jefferson, who was one of the greatest men that the United States have produced, said that newspapers should be divided into four compartments: in one of them they should print the true; in the next, the probable; in the third, the possible; and in the fourth, the lies. With regard to some of these newspapers, I incline to think, as far as their leading columns go, that an equal division of space would be found very inconvenient, and that the last-named compartment, when dealing with American questions, would have to be at least four times as large as the first

Coming back to the question of this war: I admit, of course—everybody must admit—that we are not responsi-

ble for it, for its commencement, or for the manner in which it is conducted; nor can we be responsible for its result. But there is one thing which we are responsible for, and that is for our sympathies, for the manner in which we regard it, and for the tone in which we discuss it. What shall we say, then, with regard to it? On which side shall we stand? I do not believe it is possible to be strictly, coldly neutral. The question at issue is too great, the contest is too grand in the eye of the world. It is impossible for any man, who can have an opinion worth anything on any question, not to have some kind of an opinion on the question of this war. I am not ashamed of my opinion, or of the sympathy which I feel, and have over and over again expressed, on the side of the free North. I cannot understand how any man witnessing what is enacting on the American continent can indulge in small cavils against the free people of the North, and close his eye entirely to the enormity of the purposes of the South. I cannot understand how any Englishman, who in past years has been accustomed to say that 'there was one foul blot upon the fair fame of the American Republic,' can now express any sympathy for those who would perpetuate and extend that blot. And, more, if we profess to be, though it be with imperfect and faltering steps, the followers of Him who declared it to be His Divine mission 'to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,' must we not reject with indignation and scorn the proffered alliance and friendship with a power based on human bondage, and which contemplates the overthrow and the extinction of the dearest rights of the most helpless of mankind?

If we are the friends of freedom, personal and political,—and we all profess to be so, and most of us, more or less, are striving after it more completely for our own country,—how can we withhold our sympathy from a Government and a people amongst whom white men have always been free, and who are now offering an equal freedom to the black? I advise you not to believe in the 'destruction' of the American nation. If facts should happen by any chance to force you to believe it, do not commit the crime of wishing it. I do not blame men who draw different conclusions from mine from the facts, and who believe that the restoration of the Union is impossible. As the facts lie before our senses, so must we form a judgment on them. But I blame those men that wish for such a catastrophe. For myself, I have never despaired, and I will not despair. In the language of one of our old poets, who wrote, I think, more than three hundred years ago, I will not despair,—

> 'For I have seen a ship in haven fall,
> After the storm had broke both mast
> and shroud.'

From the very outburst of this great convulsion, I have had but one hope and one faith, and it is this—that the result of this stupendous strife may be to make freedom the heritage for ever of a whole continent, and that the grandeur and the prosperity of the American Union may never be impaired.

without great debt and without great taxes. Privilege has shuddered at what might happen to old Europe if this grand experiment should succeed. But you, the workers,—you, striving after a better time,—you, struggling upwards *towards the light*, with slow and painful steps,—you have no cause to look with jealousy upon a country which, amongst all the great nations of the globe, is that one where labour has met with the highest honour, and where it has reaped its greatest reward. Are you aware of the fact, that in fifteen years, which is but as yesterday when it is past, two and a half millions of your countrymen have found a home *in the United States,—that a population* equal nearly, if not quite, to the population of this great city—itself equal to no mean kingdom—has emigrated from these shores? In the United States there has been, as you know, an open door for every man,—and millions have entered into it, and have found rest.

Now, take the two sections of the country which are engaged in this fearful struggle. In the one, labour is honoured *more than elsewhere in the* world; there, more than in any other country, men rise to competence and independence; a career is open; the pursuit of happiness is not hopelessly thwarted by the law. In the other section of that country, labour is not only not honoured, but it is degraded. The labourer is made a chattel. He is no more his own than the horse that drags a carriage through the next street; nor is his wife, nor is his child, nor is anything that is his, his own. And if you have not heard the astounding statement, it may be as well for a moment to refer to it,—that it is not black men only who should be slaves. Only today I read from one of the Southern papers a statement that—

'Slavery in the Jewish times was not the slavery of negroes; and therefore, if you confine slavery to negroes, you lose your sheet-anchor, which is the Bible-argument in favour of slavery.'

I think nothing can be more fitting for the discussion of the members of the Trade Societies of London. You in your Trade Societies help each other when you are sick, or if you meet with accidents. You do many kind acts amongst each other. You have other business also; you have to maintain what you believe to be the just rights of industry and of your separate trades; and sometimes, as you know, you do things which many people do not approve, and which, probably, when you come to think more coolly of them, you may even doubt the wisdom of yourselves. That is only saying that you are not immaculate, and that your wisdom, like the wisdom of other classes, is not absolutely perfect. But they have in the Southern States a specific for all the differences between capital and labour. They say,—

'Make the labourer capital; the free system in Europe is a rotten system; let us get rid of that, and make all the labourers as much capital and as much the property of the capitalist and employer as the capitalist's cattle and horses are property, and then the whole system will move with that perfect ease and harmony which the world admires so much in the Southern States of America.'

I believe there never was a question submitted to the public opinion of the world which it was more becoming the working men and members of Trades' Unions and Trade Societies of every kind in this country fully to consider, than this great question.

But there may be some in this room, and there are some who say to me, 'But what is to become of our trade, what is to become of the capitalist and the labourer of Lancashire?' I am not sure that much of the capital of Lancashire will not be ruined. I am not sure that very large numbers of its population will not have to remove to seek other employment, either in this or some other country. I am not one of those who underrate this great calamity. On the contrary, I have scarcely

met with any man,—not more than half a dozen,—since this distress in our county began, who has been willing to measure the magnitude of this calamity according to the scale with which I have viewed it.

But let us examine this question. The distress of Lancashire comes from a failure of the supply of cotton. The failure of the supply of cotton comes from the war in the United States. The war in the United States has originated in the effort of the slaveholders of that country to break up what they themselves admit to be the freest and best government that ever existed, for the sole purpose of making perpetual the institution of slavery. But if the South began the war, and created all the mischief, does it look reasonable that we should pat them on the back, and be their friends? If they have destroyed cotton, or withheld it, shall we therefore take them to our bosoms?

I have a letter written by an agent in the City of Nashville, who had been accustomed to buy cotton there before the war, and who returned there immediately after that city came into the possession of the Northern forces. He began his trade, and cotton came in. Not Union planters only, but Secession planters, began to bring in the produce of their plantations, and he had a fair chance of re-establishing his business; but the moment this was discovered by the commanders of the Southern forces at some distance from the city, they issued the most peremptory orders that every boat-load of cotton on the rivers, every waggon-load upon the roads, and every car-load upon the railroads, that was leaving any plantations for the purposes of sale, should be immediately destroyed. The result was, that the cotton trade was at once again put an end to, and I believe only to a very small extent has it been reopened, even to this hour.

Then take the City of New Orleans, which, as you know, has been now for many months in the possession of the Northern forces. The Northern commanders there had issued announcements that any cotton sent down to New Orleans for exportation, even though it came from the most resolved friends of secession in the district, should still be safe. It might be purchased to ship to Europe, and the proceeds of that cotton might be returned, and the trade be reopened. But you have not found cotton come down to New Orleans, although its coming there under those terms would be of no particular advantage to the North. It has been withheld with this single object, to create in the manufacturing districts of France and England a state of suffering that might at last become unbearable, and thus might compel the Governments of those countries, in spite of all that international law may teach, in spite of all that morality may enjoin upon them, to take sides with the South, and go to war with the North for the sake of liberating whatever cotton there is now in the plantations of the Secession States.

At this moment, such of you as read the City articles of the daily papers will see that a loan has been contracted for in the City, to the amount of three millions sterling, on behalf of the Southern Confederacy. It is not brought into the market by any firm with an English name; but I am sorry to be obliged to believe that many Englishmen have taken portions of that loan. Now the one great object of that loan is this, to pay in this country for vessels which are being built—*Alabamas*—from which it is hoped that so much irritation will arise in the minds of the people of the Northern States, that England may be dragged into war to take sides with the South and with slavery. The South was naturally hostile to England, because England was hostile to slavery. Now the great hope of the insurrection has been from the beginning, that Englishmen would not have fortitude to bear the calamities which it has brought upon us; but by some trick or by some accident we might be brought into a war with the North, and thereby give strength to the South.

I should hope that this question is now so plain that most Englishmen must understand it; and least of all do I expect that the six millions of men in the United Kingdom who are not enfranchised can have any doubt upon it. Their instincts are always right in the main, and if they get the facts and information, I can rely on their influence being thrown into the right scale. I wish I could state what would be as satisfactory to myself with regard to some others. There may be men outside, there are men sitting amongst your legislators, who will build and equip corsair ships to prey upon the commerce of a friendly power,—who will disregard the laws and the honour of their country,—who will trample on the Proclamation of their sovereign,—and who, for the sake of the glittering profit which sometimes waits on crime, are content to cover themselves with everlasting infamy. There may be men, too—rich men—in this city of London, who will buy in the slave-owners' loan, and who, for the chance of more gain than honest dealing will afford them, will help a conspiracy whose fundamental institution, whose corner-stone, is declared to be felony, and infamous by the statutes of their country.

I speak not to these men—I leave them to their conscience in that hour which comes to all of us, when conscience speaks and the soul is no longer deaf to her voice. I speak rather to you, the working men of London, the representatives, as you are here to-night, of the feelings and the interests of the millions who cannot hear my voice. I wish you to be true to yourselves. Dynasties may fall, aristocracies may perish, privilege will vanish into the dim past; but you, your children, and your children's children, will remain, and from you the English people will be continued to succeeding generations.

You wish the freedom of your country. You wish it for yourselves. You strive for it in many ways. Do not then give the hand of fellowship to the worst foes of freedom that the world has ever seen, and do not, I beseech you, bring down a curse upon your cause which no after-penitence can ever lift from it. You will not do this. I have faith in you. Impartial history will tell that, when your statesman were hostile or coldly neutral, when many of your rich men were corrupt, when your press—which ought to have instructed and defended—was mainly written to betray, the fate of a continent and of its vast population being in peril, you clung to freedom with an unfaltering trust that God in His infinite mercy will yet make it the heritage of all His children.

AMERICA.

V.

LONDON, JUNE 16, 1863.

[On June 16, 1863, a public meeting was held at the London Tavern, at the instance of the Union and Emancipation Society, in order to hear an address from Mr. M. D. Conway, of Eastern Virginia. Mr. Bright was in the Chair.]

If we look back a little over two years—two years and a half—when the question of secession was first raised in a practical shape, I think we shall be able to remember that, when the news first arrived in England, there was but one opinion with regard to it—that every man condemned the folly and the wickedness of the South, and protested against their plea that they had any grievance which justified them in revolt—and every man hoped that some mode might be discovered by which the terrible calamity of war might be avoided.

For a time, many thought that there would be no war. Whilst the reins were slipping from the hands—the too feeble hands—of Mr. Buchanan into the grasp of President Lincoln, there was a moment when men thought that we were about to see the wonderful example of a great question, which in all other countries would have involved a war, settled perhaps by moderation—some moderation on one side, and some concession on the other; and so long [illegible] would be no war, so long everybody condemned the South. We were afraid of a war in America, because we knew that one of the great industries of our country depended upon the continuous reception of its raw material from the Southern States. But it was a folly—it was a gross absurdity—for any man to believe, with the history of the world before him, that the people of the Northern States, twenty millions, with their free Government, would for one moment sit down satisfied with the dismemberment of their country, and make no answer to the war which had been commenced by the South.

I speak not in justification of war. I am only treating this question upon principles which are almost universally acknowledged throughout the world, and by an overwhelming majority even of those men who accept the Christian religion; and it is only upon those principles, so almost universally acknowledged, and acknowledged as much in this country as anywhere else—it is only just that we should judge the United States upon those principles

upon which we in this country would be likely to act.

But the North did not yield to the dismemberment of their country, and they did not allow a conspiracy of Southern politicians and slaveholders to seize their forts and arsenals without preparing for resistance. Then, when the people of England found that the North were about to resist, and that war was inevitable, they turned their eyes from the South, which was the beginner of the war, and looked to the North, saying that, if the North would not resist, there could be no war, and then we should get our cotton, and trade would go on as before; and therefore, from that hour to this, not a few persons in this country, who at first condemned the South, have been incessant in their condemnation of the North.

Now, I believe this is a fair statement of the feeling which prevailed when the first news of secession arrived, and of the change of opinion which took place in a few weeks, when it was found that, by the resolution of the North to maintain the integrity of their country, war, and civil war, was unavoidable. The trade interests of the country affected our opinion; and I fear did then prevent, and have since prevented, our doing justice to the people of the North.

Now I am going to transport you, in mind, to Lancashire, and the interests of Lancashire, which, after all, are the interests of the whole United Kingdom, and clearly of not a few in this metropolis. What was the condition of our greatest manufacturing industry before the war, and before secession had been practically attempted? It was this: that almost ninety per cent. of all our cotton came from the Southern States of the American Union, and was, a least nine-tenths of it, the produce c the uncompensated labour of the negr

Everybody knew that we were carr ing on a prodigious industry upon most insecure foundation; and it the commonest thing in the world men who were discussing the present and the future of the cotton trade, whether in Parliament or out of it, to point to the existence of slavery in the United States of America as the one dangerous thing in connection with that great trade; and it was one of the reasons which stimulated me on several occasions to urge upon the Government of this country to improve the Government of India, and to give us a chance of receiving a considerable portion of our supply from India, so that we might not be left in absolute want when the calamity occurred, which all thoughtful men knew must some day come, in the United States.

Now, I maintain that with a supply of cotton mainly derived from the Southern States, and raised by slave labour, two things are indisputable: first, that the supply must always be insufficient; and second, that it must always be insecure. Perhaps many of you are not aware that in the United States—I am speaking of the Slave States, and the cotton-growing States—the quantity of land which is cultivated for cotton is a mere garden, a mere plot, in comparison with the whole of the cotton region. I speak from the authority of a report lately presented to the Boston Chamber of Commerce, containing much important information on this question; and I believe that the whole acreage, or the whole breadth of the land on which cotton is grown in America, does not exceed ten thousand square miles—that is, a space one hundred miles long and one hundred miles broad, or the size of two of our largest counties in England; but the land of the ten chief cotton-producing States is sixty times as much that, being, I believe, about twelve size of England and Wales.

therefore, because there

price has not been sufficient, for, as is well known, the price has been much higher of late years, and the profit to the planter much greater; and yet, notwithstanding the land and the demand, and the price and the profit, the supply of cotton has not been sufficient for the wants of the spinners and the manufacturers of the world, and for the wants of civilization.

The particular facts with regard to this I need not, perhaps, enter into; but I find, if I compare the prices of cotton in Liverpool from 1856 to 1860 with the prices from 1841 to 1845, that every pound of cotton brought from America and sold in Liverpool fetched in the last five years more than twenty per cent. in excess of what it did in the former five years, notwithstanding that we were every year in greater difficulties through finding our supply of cotton insufficient.

But what was the reason that we did not get enough? It was because there was not labour enough in the Southern States. You see every day in the newspapers that there are four millions of slaves, but of those four millions of slaves some are growing tobacco, some rice, and some sugar; a very large number are employed in domestic servitude, and a large number in factories, mechanical operations, and business in towns; and there remain only about one million negroes, or only one-quarter of the whole number, who are regularly engaged in the cultivation of cotton.

Now, you will see that the production of cotton and its continued increase must depend upon the constantly increasing productiveness of the labour of those one million negroes, and on the natural increase of population from them. Well the increase of the population [illegible]as a slaves in the United Stat[illegible] that we [illegible] two and [illegible] wonderful example of a great question, which in all other countries would have involved a war, settled perhaps by moderation—some moderation on one side, and some concession on the other; and so long as men believed that there would be no bably never exceed—I believe it has not reached—one hundred and fifty thousand bales per annum. The exact facts with regard to this are these: that in the ten years from 1841 to 1850 the average crop was 2,173,000 bales, and in the ten years from 1851 to 1860 it was 3,252,000, being an increase of 1,079,000 bales in the ten years, or only about 100,000 bales of increase per annum.

I have shown that the increase of production must depend upon the increase of labour, because every other element is in abundance—soil, climate, and so forth. (A Voice: 'How about sugar?') A Gentleman asks about sugar. If in any particular year there was an extravagant profit upon cotton, there might be, and there probably would be, some abstraction of labour from the cultivation of tobacco, and rice, and sugar, in order to apply it to cotton, and a larger temporary increase of growth might take place; but I have given you the facts with regard to the last twenty years, and I think you will see that my statement is correct.

Now, can this be remedied under slavery? I will show you how it cannot. And first of all, everybody who is acquainted with American affairs knows that there is not very much migration of the population of the Northern States into the Southern States to engage in the ordinary occupations of agricultural labour. Labour is not honourable and is not honoured in the South, and therefore free labourers from the North are not likely to go South. Again, of all the emigration from this country—amounting as it did, in the fifteen years from 1846 to 1860, to two millions five hundred thousand persons, being equal to the whole of the population of this great city—a mere trifle went South and settled there to pursue the occupation of agriculture; they remained in the North, where labour is honourable and honoured.

Whence, then, could the planters of the South receive their increasing labour? Only from the slave-ship and the coast Africa. But, fortunately for the

world, the United States' Government has never yet become so prostrate under the heel of the slave-owner as to consent to the reopening of the slave-trade. Therefore the Southern planter was in this unfortunate position: he could not tempt, perhaps he did not want, free labourers from the North; he could not tempt, perhaps he did not want, free labourers from Europe; and if he did want, he was not permitted to fetch slave labour from Africa. Well, that being so, we arrive at this conclusion—that whilst the cultivation of cotton was performed by slave labour, you were shut up for your hope of increased growth to the small increase that was possible with the increase of two and a half per cent. per annum in the population of the slaves, about one million in number, that have been regularly employed in the cultivation of cotton.

Then, if the growth was thus insufficient—and I as one connected with the trade can speak very clearly upon that point—I ask you whether the production and the supply were not necessarily insecure by reason of the institution of slavery? It was perilous within the Union. In this country we made one mistake in our forecast of this question: we did not believe that the South would commit suicide; we thought it possible that the slaves might revolt. They might revolt, but their subjugation was inevitable, because the whole power of the Union was pledged to the maintenance of order in every part of its dominions.

But if there be men who think that the cotton trade would be safer if the South were an independent State, with slavery established there in permanence, they greatly mistake; because, whatever was the danger of revolt in the Southern States whilst the Union was complete, the possibility of revolt and the possibility of success would surely be greatly increased if the North were separate from the South, and the negro had only his Southern master, and not the Northern power, to contend against.

But I believe there is little danger of revolt, and no possibility of success. When the revolt took place in the island of St. Domingo, the blacks were far superior in numbers to the whites. In the Southern States it is not so. Ignorant, degraded, without organization, without arms, and scarcely with any faint hope of freedom for ever, except the enthusiastic hope which they have when they believe that God will some day stretch out His arm for their deliverance—I say that under these circumstances, to my mind, there was no reasonable expectation of revolt, and that they had no expectation whatever of success in any attempt to gain their liberty by force of arms.

But now we are in a different position. Slavery itself has chosen its own issue, and has chosen its own field. Slavery—and when I say slavery, I mean the slave power—has not trusted to the future; but it has rushed into the battle-field to settle this great question; and having chosen war, it is from day to day sinking to inevitable ruin under it. Now, if we are agreed—and I am keeping you still to Lancashire and to its interests for a moment longer—that this vast industry with all its interests of capital and labour has been standing on a menacing volcano, is it not possible that hereafter it may be placed upon a rock which nothing can disturb?

Imagine—what of course some people will say I have no right to imagine—imagine the war over, the Union restored and slavery abolished—does any man suppose that there would afterwards be in the South one single negro fewer than there are at present? On the contrary, I believe there would be more. I believe there is many a negro in the Northern States, and even in Canada, who, if the lash, and the chain, and the branding-iron, and the despotism against which even he dared not complain, were abolished for ever, would turn his face to the sunny lands of the South, and would find himself happier and more useful there than he can be in a more Northern clime.

More than this, there would be a migration from the North to the South.

You do not suppose that those beautiful States, those regions than which earth offers nothing to man more fertile and more lovely, are shunned by the enterprising population of the North because they like the rigours of a Northern winter and the greater changeableness of the Northern seasons? Once abolish slavery in the South, and the whole of the country will be open to the enterprise and to the industry of all. And more than that, when you find that, only the other day, not fewer than four thousand emigrants, most of them from the United Kingdom, landed in one day in the city of New York, do you suppose that all those men would go north and west at once? Would not some of them turn their faces southwards, and seek the clime of the sun, which is so grateful to all men; where they would find a soil more fertile, rivers more abundant, and everything that Nature offers more profusely given, but from which they are now shut out by the accursed power which slavery exerts? With freedom you would have a gradual filling up of the wildernesses of the Southern States; you would have there, not population only, but capital, and industry, and roads, and schools, and everything which tends to produce growth, and wealth, and prosperity.

I maintain—and I believe my opinion will be supported by all those men who are most conversant with American affairs—that, with slavery abolished, with freedom firmly established in the South, you would find in ten years to come a rapid increase in the growth of cotton; and not only would its growth be rapid, but its permanent increase would be secured.

I said that I was interested in this great question of cotton. I come from the midst of the great cotton industry of Lancashire; much the largest portion of anything I have in the world depends upon it; not a little of it is now utterly valueless, during the continuance of this war. My neighbours, by thousands and scores of thousands, are suffering, more or less, as I am suffering; and many of them, as you know—more than a quarter of a million of them—have been driven from a subsistence gained by their honourable labour to the extremest poverty, and to a dependence upon the charity of their fellow-countrymen. My interest is the interest of all the population.

My interest is against a mere enthusiasm, a mere sentiment, a mere visionary fancy of freedom as against slavery. I am speaking now as a matter of business. I am glad when matters of business go straight with matters of high sentiment and morality, and from this platform I declare my solemn conviction that there is no greater enemy to Lancashire, to its capital and to its labour, than the man who wishes the cotton agriculture of the Southern States to be continued under the conditions of slave labour.

One word more upon another branch of the question, and I have done. I would turn for a moment from commerce to politics. I believe that our true commercial interests in this country are very much in harmony with what I think ought to be our true political sympathies. There is no people in the world, I think, that more fully and entirely accepts the theory that one nation acts very much upon the character and upon the career of another, than England; for our newspapers and our statesmen, our writers and our speakers of every class, are constantly telling us of the wonderful influence which English constitutional government and English freedom have on the position and career of every nation in Europe. I am not about to deny that some such influence, and occasionally, I believe, a beneficent influence, is thus exerted; but if we exert any influence upon Europe—and we pride ourselves upon it—perhaps it will not be a humiliation to admit that we feel some influence exerted upon us by the great American Republic. American freedom acts upon England, and there is nothing that is better known, at the west end of this great city—from which I have just

come—than the influence that has been, and nothing more feared than the influence that may be, exerted by the United States upon this country.

We all of us know that there has been a great effect produced in England by the career of the United States. An emigration of three or four millions of persons from the United Kingdom, during the last forty years, has bound us to them by thousands of family ties, and therefore it follows that whatever there is that is good, and whatever there is that is free in America, which we have not, we know something about, and gradually may begin to wish for, and some day may insist upon having.

And when I speak of 'us,' I mean the people of this country. When I am asserting the fact that the people of England have a great interest in the well-being of the American Republic, I mean the people of England. I do not speak of the wearers of crowns or of coronets, but of the twenty millions of people in this country who live on their labour, and who, having no votes, are not counted in our political census, but without whom there could be no British nation at all. I say that these have an interest, almost as great and direct as though they were living in Massachusetts or New York, in the tremendous struggle for freedom which is now shaking the whole North American Continent.

During the last two years there has been much said, and much written, and some things done in this country, which are calculated to gain us the hate of both sections of the American Union. I believe that a course of policy might have been taken by the English press, and by the English Government, and by what are called the influential classes in England, that would have bound them to our hearts and us to their hearts. I speak of the twenty millions of the Free North. I believe we might have been so thoroughly united with that people, that all remembrance of the war of the Revolution and of the war of 1812 would have been obliterated, and we should have been in heart and spirit for all time forth but one nation.

I can only hope that, as time passes, and our people become better informed, they will be more just, and that ill feeling of every kind will pass away; that in future all who love freedom here will hold converse with all who love freedom there, and that the two nations, separated as they are by the ocean, come as they are, notwithstanding, of one stock, may be in future time united in soul, and may work together for the advancement of the liberties and the happiness of mankind.

AMERICA.

VI.

MR. ROEBUCK'S MOTION FOR RECOGNITION OF THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 30, 1863.

I WILL not attempt to follow the noble Lord in the laboured attack which he has made upon the Treasury Bench, for these two reasons:—that he did not appear to me very much to understand what it was he was condemning them for; and, again, I am not in the habit of defending Gentlemen who sit on that bench. I will address myself to the question before the House, which I think the House generally feels to be very important, although I am quite satisfied that they do not feel it to be a practical one. Neither do I think that the House will be disposed to take any course in support of the hon. Gentleman who introduced the resolution now before us.

We sometimes are engaged in discussions, and have great difficulty to know what we are about; but the hon. Gentleman left us in no kind of doubt when he sat down. He proposed a resolution, in words which, under certain circumstances and addressed to certain parties, might end in offensive or injurious consequences. Taken in connection with his character, and with the speech he has made to-night, and with the speech he has recently made elsewhere on this subject, I may say that he would have come to about the same conclusion if he had proposed to address the Crown inviting the Queen to declare war against the United States of America. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is known not to be very zealous in the particular line of opinion that I have adopted, addressed the hon. Gentleman in the smoothest language possible, but still he was obliged to charge him with the tone of bitter hostility which marked his speech.

On a recent occasion the hon. Member addressed some members of his constituency—I do not mean in his last speech, I mean in the speech in August last year—in which he entered upon a course of prophecy which, like most prophecies in our day, does not happen to come true. But he said then what he said to-night, that the American people and Government were overbearing. He did not tell his constituents that the Government of the United States had, almost during the whole of his lifetime, been conducted by his friends of the South. He said that, if they were divided, they would not be able to bully the whole world; and he made use of these expressions: 'The North will never be our friends; of the South you can make friends,—they are Englishmen,—they are not the scum and refuse of the world.'

Mr. Roebuck: 'Allow me to correct

that statement. What I said I now state to the House, that the men of the South were Englishmen, but that the army of the North was composed of the scum of Europe.'

Mr. Bright: I take, of course, that explanation of the hon. and learned Gentleman, with this explanation from me, that there is not, so far as I can find, any mention near that paragraph, and I think there is not in the speech a single word, about the army.

Mr. Roebuck: 'I assure you I said that.'

Mr. Bright: Then I take it for granted that the hon. and learned Gentleman said that, or that if he said what I have read he greatly regrets it.

Mr. Roebuck: 'No, I did not say it.'

Mr. Bright: The hon. and learned Gentleman in his resolution speaks of other powers. But he has unceremoniously got rid of all the powers but France, and he comes here to-night with a story of an interview with a man whom he describes as the great ruler of France—tells us of a conversation with him—asks us to accept the lead of the Emperor of the French on, I will undertake to say, one of the greatest questions that ever was submitted to the British Parliament. But it is not long since the hon. and learned Gentleman held very different language. I recollect in this House, only about two years ago, that the hon. and learned Gentleman said: 'I hope I may be permitted to express in respectful terms my opinion, even though it should affect so great a potentate as the Emperor of the French. I have no faith in the Emperor of the French.' On another occasion the hon. and learned Gentleman said,—not, I believe, in this House,—'I am still of opinion that we have nothing but animosity and bad faith to look for from the French Emperor.' And he went on to say that still, though he had been laughed at, he adopted the patriotic character of 'Tear-'em,' and was still at his post.

And when the hon. and learned Gentleman came back, I think from his expedition to Cherbourg, does the House recollect the language he used on that occasion—language which, if it expressed the sentiments which he felt, at least I think he might have been content to have withheld? If I am not mistaken, referring to the salutation between the Emperor of the French and the Queen of these kingdoms, he said, 'When I saw his perjured lips touch that hallowed cheek.' And now, Sir, the hon. and learned Gentleman has been to Paris, introduced there by the hon. Member for Sunderland, and he has sought to become as it were in the palace of the French Emperor a co-conspirator with him to drag this country into a policy which I maintain is as hostile to its interests as it would be degrading to its honour.

But then the high contracting parties, I suspect, are not agreed, because I will say this in justice to the French Emperor, that there has never come from him in public, nor from any one of his Ministers, nor is there anything to be found in what they have written, that is tinctured in the smallest degree with that bitter hostility which the hon. and learned Gentleman has constantly exhibited to the United States of America and their people. France, if not wise in this matter, is at least not unfriendly. The hon. and learned Member, in my opinion—indeed I am sure—is not friendly, and I believe he is not wise.

But now, on this subject, without speaking disrespectfully of the great potentate who has taken the hon. and learned Gentleman into his confidence, I must say that the Emperor runs the risk of being far too much represented in this House. We have now two—I will not call them envoys extraordinary, but most extraordinary. And, if report speaks true, even they are not all. The hon. Member for King's County (Mr. Hennessy)—I do not see him in his place—came back the other day from Paris, and there were whispers that he had seen the great ruler of France, and that he could tell everybody in the most confidential manner that the Emperor

was ready to make a spring at Russia for the sake of delivering Poland, and that he only waited for a word from the Prime Minister of England.

I do not understand the policy of the Emperor if these new Ministers of his tell the truth. For, Sir, if one Gentleman says that he is about to make war with Russia, and another that he is about to make war with America, I am disposed to look at what he is already doing. I find that he is holding Rome against the opinion of all Italy. He is conquering Mexico by painful steps, every footstep marked by devastation and blood. He is warring, in some desultory manner, in China, and for aught I know he may be about to do it in Japan. I say that, if he is to engage, at the same time, in dismembering the greatest Eastern Empire and the great Western Republic, he has a greater ambition than Louis XIV, a greater daring than the first of his name; and that, if he endeavours to grasp these great transactions, his dynasty may fall and be buried in the ruins of his own ambition.

I can say only one sentence upon the question to which the noble Lord has directed so much attention. I understand that we have not heard all the story from Paris, and further, that it is not at all remarkable, seeing that the secret has been confided to two persons, that we have not heard it correctly. I saw my hon. Friend, the Member for Sunderland, near me, and his face underwent remarkable contortions during the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman, and I felt perfectly satisfied that he did not agree with what his colleague was saying. I am told there is in existence a little memorandum which contains an account of what was said and done at that interview in Paris: and before the discussion closes we shall no doubt have that memorandum produced, and from it know how far these two gentlemen are agreed.

I now come to the proposition which the hon. and learned Gentleman has submitted to the House, and which he has already submitted to a meeting of his constituents at Sheffield. At that meeting, on the 27th of May, the hon. and learned Gentleman used these words: 'What I have to consider is, what are the interests of England: what is for her interests I believe to be for the interests of the world.' Now, leaving out of consideration the latter part of that statement, if the hon. and learned Gentleman will keep to the first part of it, then what we have now to consider in this question is, what is for the interest of England. But the hon. and learned Gentleman has put it to-night in almost as offensive a way as he did before at Sheffield, and has said that the United States would not bully the world if they were divided and subdivided; for he went so far as to contemplate division into more than two independent sections. I say that the whole of his case rests upon a miserable jealousy of the United States, or on what I may term a base fear. It is a fear which appears to me just as groundless as any of those panics by which the hon. and learned Gentleman has attempted to frighten the country.

There never was a State in the world which was less capable of aggression with regard to Europe than the United States of America. I speak of its government, of its confederation, of the peculiarities of its organization; for the House will agree with me, that nothing is more peculiar than the fact of the great power which the separate States, both of the North and South, exercise upon the policy and course of the country. I will undertake to say, that, unless in a question of overwhelming magnitude, which would be able to unite any people, it would be utterly hopeless to expect that all the States of the American Union would join together to support the central Government in any plan of aggression on England or any other country of Europe.

Besides, nothing can be more certain than this, that the Government which is now in power, and the party which have elected Mr. Lincoln to office, is a

moral and peaceable party, which has been above all things anxious to cultivate the best possible state of feeling with regard to England. The hon. and learned Gentleman, of all men, ought not to entertain this fear of United States' aggression, for he is always boasting of his readiness to come into the field himself. I grant that it would be a great necessity indeed which would justify a conscription in calling out the hon. and learned Gentleman, but I say he ought to consider well before he spreads these alarms among the people. For the sake of this miserable jealousy, and that he may help to break up a friendly nation, he would depart from the usages of nations, and create an everlasting breach between the people of England and the people of the United States of America. He would do more; and, notwithstanding what he has said to-night, I may put this as my strongest argument against his case —he would throw the weight of England into the scale in favour of the cause of slavery.

I want to show the hon. and learned Gentleman that England is not interested in the course he proposes we should take; and when I speak of interests, I mean the commercial interests, the political interests, and the moral interests of the country. And first, with regard to the supply of cotton, in which the noble Lord the Member for Stamford takes such a prodigious interest. I must explain to the noble Lord that I know a little about cotton. I happen to have been engaged in that business,—not all my life, for the noble Lord has seen me here for twenty years, —but my interests have been in it; and at this moment the firm of which I am a member have no less than six mills, which have been at a stand for nearly a year, owing to the impossibility of working under the present conditions of the supply of cotton. I live among a people who live by this trade; and there is no man in England who has a more direct interest in it than I have. Before the war, the supply of cotton was little and costly, and every year it was becoming more costly, for the supply did not keep pace with the demand.

The point that I am about to argue is this: I believe that the war which is now raging in America is more likely to abolish slavery than not, and more likely to abolish it than any other thing that can be proposed in the world. I regret very much that the pride and passion of men are such as to justify me in making this statement. The supply of cotton under slavery must always be insecure. The House felt so in past years; for at my recommendation they appointed a committee, and but for the folly of a foolish Minister they would have appointed a special commission to India at my request. Is there any gentleman in this House who will not agree with me in this,—that it would be far better for our great Lancashire industry that our supply of cotton should be grown by free labour than by slave labour?

Before the war, the whole number of negroes engaged in the production of cotton was about one million,—that is, about a fourth of the whole of the negroes in the Slave States. The annual increase in the number of negroes growing cotton was about twenty-five thousand,—only two and a-half per cent. It was impossible for the Southern States to keep up their growth of sugar, rice, tobacco, and their ordinary slave productions, and at the same time to increase the growth of cotton more than at a rate corresponding with the annual increase of negroes. Therefore you will find that the quantity of cotton grown, taking ten years together, increased only at the rate of about one hundred thousand bales a-year. But that was nothing like the quantity which we required. That supply could not be increased, because the South did not cultivate more than probably one and a-half per cent. of the land which was capable of cultivation for cotton.

The great bulk of the land in the Southern States is uncultivated. Ten

thousand square miles are appropriated to the cultivation of cotton; but there are six hundred thousand square miles, or sixty times as much land, which is capable of being cultivated for cotton. It was, however, impossible that the land should be so cultivated, because, although you had climate and sun, you had no labour. The institution of slavery forbade free-labour men in the North to come to the South; and every emigrant that landed in New York from Europe knew that the Slave States were no States for him, and therefore he went North or West. The laws of the United States, the sentiments of Europe and of the world, being against any opening of the slave-trade, the planters of the South were shut up, and the annual increase in the supply of cotton could increase only in the same proportion as the annual increase in the number of their negroes.

There is only one other point with regard to that matter which is worth mentioning. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Sheffield will understand it, although on some points he seems to be peculiarly dark. If a planter in the Southern States wanted to grow one thousand bales of cotton a-year, he would require about two hundred negroes. Taking them at five hundred dollars, or one hundred pounds each, which is not more than half the price of a first-class hand, the cost of the two hundred would be twenty thousand pounds. To grow one thousand bales of cotton a-year, you require not only to possess an estate, machinery, tools, and other things necessary to carry on the cotton-growing business, but you must find a capital of twenty thousand pounds to buy the actual labourers by whom the plantation is to be worked; and therefore, as every gentleman will see at once, this great trade, to a large extent, was shut up in the hands of men who were required to be richer than would be necessary if slavery did not exist.

Thus the plantation business to a large extent became a monopoly, and therefore even on that account the production of cotton was constantly limited and controlled. I was speaking to a gentleman the other day from Mississippi. I believe no man in America or in England is more acquainted with the facts of this case. He has been for many years a Senator from the State of Mississippi. He told me that every one of these facts was true, and said, 'I have no doubt whatever that in ten years after freedom in the South, or after freedom in conjunction with the North, the production of cotton will be doubled, and cotton will be forwarded to the consumers of the world at a much less price than we have had it for many years past.'

I shall turn for a moment to the political interest, to which the hon. and learned Gentleman paid much more attention than to the commercial. The more I consider the course of this war, the more I come to the conclusion that it is improbable in future that the United States will be broken into separate republics. I do not come to the conclusion that the North will conquer the South. But I think the conclusion to which I am more disposed to come now than at any time since the breaking out of the war is this,—that if a separation should occur for a time, still the interest, the sympathies, the sentiments, the necessities of the whole continent, and its ambition also, which, as hon. Gentlemen have mentioned, seems to some people to be a necessity, render it highly probable that the continent would still be united under one central Government. I may be quite mistaken. I do not express that opinion with any more confidence than hon. Gentlemen have expressed theirs in favour of a permanent dissolution; but now is not this possible,—that the Union may be again formed on the basis of the South? There are persons who think that possible. I hope it is not, but we cannot say that it is absolusely impossible.

Is it not possible that the Northern Government may be baffled in their

military operations? Is it not possible that, by their own incapacity, they may be humiliated before their own people? And is it not even possible that the party which you please to call the Peace party in the North, but which is in no sense a peace party, should unite with the South, and that the Union should be reconstituted on the basis of Southern opinions and of the Southern social system? Is it not possible, for example, that the Southern people, and those in their favour, should appeal to the Irish population of America against the negroes, between whom there has been little sympathy and little respect; and is it not possible they should appeal to the commercial classes of the North—and the rich commercial classes in all countries, from the uncertainty of their possessions and the fluctuation of their interests, are rendered always timid and very often corrupt—is it not possible, I say, that they might prefer the union of their whole country upon the basis of the South, rather than that union which many Members of this House look upon with so much apprehension?

If that should ever take place—but I believe, with my hon. Friend below me (Mr. Forster), in the moral government of the world, and therefore I cannot believe that it will take place; but if it were to take place, with their great armies, and with their great navy, and their almost unlimited power, they might seek to drive England out of Canada, France out of Mexico, and whatever nations are interested in them out of the islands of the West Indies; and you might then have a great State built upon slavery and war, instead of that free State to which I look, built up upon an educated people, upon general freedom, and upon morality in government.

Now there is one more point to which the hon. and learned Gentleman will forgive me if I allude—he does not appear to me to think it of great importance—and that is, the morality of this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the hon. Gentleman who spoke from the bench behind—and I think the noble Lord, if I am not mistaken—referred to the carnage which is occasioned by this lamentable strife. Well, carnage, I presume, is the accompaniment of all war. Two years ago the press of London ridiculed very much the battles of the United States, in which nobody was killed and few were hurt. There was a time when I stood up in this House, and pointed out the dreadful horrors of war. There was a war waged by this country in the Crimea; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with an uneasy conscience, is constantly striving to defend that struggle. That war—for it lasted about the same time that the American war has lasted—at least destroyed as many lives as are estimated to have been destroyed in the United States.

My hon. Friend the Member for Montrose, who, I think, is not in the House, made a speech in Scotland some time last year, in which he gave the numbers which were lost by Russia in that war. An hon. Friend near me observes, that some people do not reckon the Russians for anything. I say, if you will add the Russians to the English, and the two to the French, and the three to the Sardinians, and the four to the Turks, that more lives were lost in the invasion of the Crimea, in the two years that it lasted, than have been lost hitherto in the American war. That is no defence of the carnage of the American war; but let hon. Gentlemen bear in mind that, when I protested against the carnage in the Crimea—for an object which few could comprehend and nobody can fairly explain—I was told that I was actuated by a morbid sentimentality. Well, if I am converted, if I view the mortality in war with less horror than I did then, it must be attributed to the arguments of hon. Gentlemen opposite and on the Treasury bench; but the fact is, I view this carnage just as I viewed that, with only this difference, that while our

soldiers perished three thousand miles from home in a worthless and indefensible cause, these men were on their own soil, and every man of them knew for what he enlisted and for what purpose he was to fight.

Now, I will ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and those who are of opinion with him on this question of slaughter in the American war—a slaughter which I hope there is no hon. Member here, and no person out of this House, that does not in his calm moments look upon with grief and horror—to consider what was the state of things before the war. It was this: that every year in the Slave States of America there were one hundred and fifty thousand children born into the world—born with the badge and the doom of slavery—born to the liability by law, and by custom, and by the devilish cupidity of man—to the lash and to the chain and to the branding-iron, and to be taken from their families and carried they know not where.

I want to know whether you feel as I feel upon this question. When I can get down to my home from this House, I find half a dozen little children playing upon my hearth. How many Members are there who can say with me, that the most innocent, the most pure, the most holy joy which in their past years they have felt, or in their future years they have hoped for, has not arisen from contact and association with our precious children? Well, then, if that be so—if, when the hand of Death takes one of those flowers from our dwelling, our heart is overwhelmed with sorrow and our household is covered with gloom; what would it be if our children were brought up to this infernal system—one hundred and fifty thousand of them every year brought into the world in these Slave States, amongst these 'gentlemen,' amongst this 'chivalry,' amongst these men that we can make our friends?

Do you forget the thousand-fold griefs and the countless agonies which belonged to the silent conflict of slavery before the war began? It is all very well for the hon. and learned Gentleman to tell me, to tell this House—he will not tell the country with any satisfaction to it—that slavery, after all, is not so bad a thing. The brother of my hon. Friend the Member for South Durham told me that in North Carolina he himself saw a woman whose every child, ten in number, had been sold when they grew up to the age at which they would fetch a price to their master.

I have not heard a word to-night of another matter—the Proclamation of the President of the United States. The hon. and learned Gentleman spoke somewhere in the country, and he had not the magnanimity to abstain from a statement which I was going to say he must have known had no real foundation. I can make all allowance for the passion and I was going to say the malice—but I will say the ill-will of the hon. and learned Gentleman; but I make no allowance for his ignorance. I make no allowance for that, because if he is ignorant it is his own fault, for God has given him an intellect which ought to keep him from ignorance on a question of this magnitude. I now take that Proclamation. What do you propose to do? You propose by your resolution to help the South, if possible, to gain and sustain its independence. Nobody doubts that. The hon. and learned Gentleman will not deny it. But what becomes of the Proclamation? I should like to ask any lawyer in what light we stand as regards that Proclamation? To us there is only one country in what was called the United States; there is only one President, there is only one general Legislature, there is only one law; and if that Proclamation be lawful anywhere, we are not in a condition to deny its legality, because at present we know no President Davis, nor do we know the men who are about him. We have our Consuls in the South, but recognizing only one Legislature, one President, one law. So far as we are concerned, that Proclamation is a legal and effective document.

AMERICA.

VII.

LONDON, JUNE 29, 1867.

[The following speech was made at a public breakfast given to William Lloyd Garrison, in St. James's Hall, at which Mr. Bright occupied the Chair.]

The position in which I am placed this morning is one very unusual for me, and one that I find somewhat difficult; but I consider it a signal distinction to be permitted to take a prominent part in the proceedings of this day, which are intended to commemorate one of the greatest of the great triumphs of freedom, and to do honour to a most eminent instrument in the achievement of that freedom. There may be, perhaps, those who ask what is this triumph of which I speak. To put it briefly, and, indeed, only to put one part of it, I may say that it is a triumph which has had the effect of raising 4,000,000 of human beings from the very lowest depth of social and political degradation to that lofty height which men have attained when they possess equality of rights in the first country on the globe. More than this, it is a triumph which has pronounced the irreversible doom of slavery in all countries and for all time. Another question suggests itself—how has this great triumph been accomplished? The answer suggests itself in another question—How is it that any great thing is accomplished? By love of justice, by constant devotion to a great cause, and by an unfaltering faith that what is right will in the end succeed.

When I look at this hall, filled with such an assembly—when I partake of the sympathy which runs from heart to heart at this moment in welcome to our guest of to-day—I cannot but contrast his present position with that which, not so far back but that many of us can remember, he occupied in his own country. It is not forty years ago, I believe about the year 1829, when the guest whom we honour this morning was spending his solitary days in a prison in the slave-owning city of Baltimore. I will not say that he was languishing in prison, for that I do not believe; he was sustained by a hope that did not yield to the persecution of those who thus maltreated him; and to show that the effect of that imprisonment was of no avail to suppress or extinguish his ardour, within two years after that he had the courage, the audacity—I dare say many of his countrymen used even a stronger phrase than that—he had the courage to commence the publication, in the city of Boston, of a newspaper devoted mainly to the question of the abolition of slavery. The first number of that paper, issued on the 1st of January, 1831, contained an address to the public, one passage of which I have often read with the greatest interest, and it is a key to the

future life of Mr. Garrison. He had been complained of for having used hard language—which is a very common complaint indeed—and he said in his first number :—

'I am aware that many object to the severity of my language, but is there not cause for such severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. I am in earnest, I will not equivocate, I will not excuse, I will not retract a single inch, and I will be heard.'

And that, after all, expresses to a great extent the future course of his life. But what was at that time the temper of the people amongst whom he lived—of the people who are glorying now, as they well may glory, in the abolition of slavery throughout their country? At that time it was very little better in the North than it was in the South. I think it was in the year 1835 that riots of the most serious character took place in some of the Northern cities: during that time Mr. Garrison's life was in imminent peril; and he has never ascertained to this day how it was that he was left alive on the earth to carry out his great work. Turning to the South, a State that has lately suffered from the ravages of armies, the State of Georgia, by its legislature of House, Senate, and Governor, if my memory does not deceive me, passed a bill, offering 10,000 dollars reward—[Mr. Garrison here said '5,000']—well, they seemed to think there were people who would do it cheap—offering 5,000 dollars, and zeal, doubtless, would make up the difference, for the capture of Mr. Garrison, or for adequate proof of his death. Now, these were menaces and perils such as we have not in our time been accustomed to in this country in any of our political movements, and we shall take a very poor measure indeed of the conduct of the leaders of the Emancipation party in the United States if we estimate them by that of any of those who have been concerned in political movements amongst us. But, notwithstanding all drawbacks, the cause was gathering strength, and Mr. Garrison found himself by-and-by surrounded by a small but increasing band of men and women who were devoted to this cause, as he himself was. We have in this country a very noble woman, who taught the English people much upon this question about thirty years ago: I allude to Harriet Martineau. I recollect well the impression with which I read a most powerful and touching paper which she had written, and which was published in the number of the *Westminster Review* for December, 1838. It was entitled 'The Martyr Age of the United States.' The paper introduced to the English public the great names which were appearing on the scene in connection with this cause in America. There was, of course I need hardly say, our eminent guest of to-day; there was Arthur Tappan, and Lewis Tappan, and James G. Birney of Alabama, a planter and slave-owner, who liberated his slaves and came North, and became, I believe, the first Presidential candidate upon Abolition principles in the United States. There were besides them, Dr. Channing, John Quincy Adams, a statesman and President of the United States, and father of the eminent man who is now Minister from that people amongst us. Then there was Wendell Phillips, admitted to be by all who knew him perhaps the most powerful orator who speaks the English language. I might refer to others, to Charles Sumner, the scholar and statesman, and Horace Greeley, the first of journalists in the United States, if not the first of journalists in the world. But, besides these, there were of noble women not a few. There was Lydia Maria Child; there were the two sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, ladies who came from South Carolina, who liberated their slaves, and devoted all they had to the service of this just cause; and Maria Weston Chapman, of whom Miss Martineau speaks in terms which, though I do not exactly recollect them, yet I know describe her as noble-minded, beautiful, and good. It may be that

there are some of her family who are now within the sound of my voice. If it be so, all I have to say is, that I hope they will feel, in addition to all they have felt heretofore as to the character of their mother, that we who are here can appreciate her services, and the services of all who were united with her as co-operators in this great and worthy cause. But there was another whose name must not be forgotten, a man whose name must live for ever in history, Elijah P. Lovejoy, who in the free State of Illinois laid down his life for the cause. When I read that article by Harriet Martineau, and the description of those men and women there given, I was led, I know not how, to think of a very striking passage which I am sure must be familiar to most here, because it is to be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After the writer of that Epistle has described the great men and fathers of the nation, he says:—'Time would fail me to tell of Gideon, of Barak, of Samson, of Jephtha, of David, of Samuel, and the Prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.' I ask if this grand passage of the inspired writer may not be applied to that heroic band who have made America the perpetual home of freedom?

Thus, in spite of all that persecutions could do, opinion grew in the North in favour of freedom; but in the South, alas! in favour of that most devilish delusion that slavery was a Divine institution. The moment that idea took possession of the South, war was inevitable. Neither fact, nor argument, nor counsel, nor philosophy, nor religion, could by any possibility affect the discussion of the question when once the Church leaders of the South had taught their people that slavery was a Divine institution; for then they took their stand on other and different, and what they in their blindness thought higher grounds, and they said, 'Evil! be thou my good;' and so they exchanged light for darkness, and freedom for bondage, and good for evil, and, if you like, heaven for hell. Of course, unless there was some stupendous miracle, greater than any that is on record even in the inspired writings, it was impossible that war should not spring out of that state of things; and the political slaveholders, that 'dreadful brotherhood, in whom all turbulent passions were let loose,' the moment they found that the presidential election of 1860 was adverse to the cause of slavery, took up arms to sustain their cherished and endangered system. Then came the outbreak which had been so often foretold, so often menaced; and the ground reeled under the nation during four years of agony, until at last, after the smoke of the battle-field had cleared away, the horrid shape which had cast its shadow over a whole continent had vanished, and was gone for ever. An ancient and renowned poet has said—

'Unholy is the voice
Of loud thanksgiving over slaughtered men.'

It becomes us not to rejoice, but to be humbled, that a chastisement so terrible should have fallen upon any of our race; but we may be thankful for this—that this chastisement was at least not sent in vain. The great triumph in the field was not all; there came after it another great triumph—a triumph over passion, and there came up before the world the spectacle, not of armies and military commanders, but of the magnanimity and mercy of a powerful and victorious nation. The vanquished were treated as the vanquished, in the history of the world, have never before been treated. There was a universal feeling in the North that every care should be taken of those who had so recently and marvellously been enfranchised. Immediately we found that the privileges of independent labour were open to them,

schools were established in which their sons might obtain an education that would raise them to an intellectual position never reached by their fathers; and at length full political rights were conferred upon those who a few short years, or rather months before, had been called chattels, and things, to be bought and sold in any market. And we may feel assured, that those persons in the Northern States who befriended the negro in his bondage will not now fail to assist his struggles for a higher position. May we not say, reviewing what has taken place—and I have only glanced in the briefest possible way at the chief aspects of this great question—that probably history has no sadder, and yet, if we take a different view, I may say also probably no brighter page? To Mr. Garrison more than to any other man this is due; his is the creation of that opinion which has made slavery hateful, and which has made freedom possible in America. His name is venerated in his own country—venerated where not long ago it was a name of obloquy and reproach. His name is venerated in this country and in Europe wheresoever Christianity softens the hearts and lessens the sorrows of men; and I venture to say that in time to come, near or remote I know not, his name will become the herald and the synonym of good to millions of men who will dwell on the now almost unknown continent of Africa.

But we must not allow our own land to be forgotten or depreciated, even whilst we are saying what our feelings bid us say of our friend beside me and of our other friends across the water. We, too, can share in the triumph I have described, and in the honours which the world is willing to shower upon our guest, and upon those who, like him, are unwearied in doing good. We have had slaves in the colonial territories that owned the sway of this country. Our position was different from that in which the Americans stood towards theirs; the negroes were far from being so numerous, and they were not in our midst, but 4,000 miles away. We had no prejudices of colour to overcome, we had a Parliament that was omnipotent in those colonies, and public opinion acting upon that Parliament was too powerful for the Englishmen who were interested in the continuance of slavery. We liberated our slaves; for the English soil did not reject the bondsman, but the moment he touched it made him free. We have now in our memory Clarkson, and Wilberforce, and Buxton, and Sturge; and even now we have within this hall the most eloquent living English champion of the freedom of the slave in my friend, and our friend, George Thompson. Well, then, I may presume to say that we are sharers in that good work which has raised our guest to eminence; and we may divide it with the country from which he comes. Our country is still his; for did not his fathers bear allegiance to our ancient monarchy, and were they not at one time citizens of this commonwealth? and may we not add that the freedom which now overspreads his noble nation first sprang into life amongst our own ancestors? To Mr. Garrison, as is stated in one of the letters which has just been read, to William Lloyd Garrison it has been given, in a manner not often permitted to those who do great things of this kind, to see the ripe fruit of his vast labours. Over a territory large enough to make many realms, he has seen hopeless toil supplanted by compensated industry; and where the bondman dragged his chain, there freedom is established for ever. We now welcome him amongst us as a friend whom some of us have known long; for I have watched his career with no common interest, even when I was too young to take much part in public affairs; and I have kept within my heart his name, and the names of those who have been associated with him in every step which he has taken; and in public debates in the halls of peace, and even on the blood-soiled fields of war, my heart has always been with those who were the

friends of freedom. We welcome him, then, with a cordiality which knows no stint and no limit for him and for his noble associates, both men and women; and we venture to speak a verdict which, I believe, will be sanctioned by all mankind, not only by those who live now, but by those who shall come after, to whom their perseverance and their success shall be a lesson and a help in the future struggles which remain for men to make. One of our oldest and greatest poets has furnished me with a line that well expresses that verdict. Are not William Lloyd Garrison and his fellow-labourers in that world's work—are they not

'On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be filed?'

IRELAND.

I.

MAYNOOTH GRANT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 16, 1845.

[On April 3rd Sir Robert Peel proposed a Resolution for the improvement of Maynooth College, the grant to consist of 26,000*l.* per annum. It was suggested by some speakers, that the act would justify the endowment of the Roman Catholic priesthood, and Lord John Russell asserted that such a plan would be a larger, more liberal, and more statesmanlike measure. Others objected to the grant on theological grounds, others for the reason that it was a step towards endowing another Church Establishment in Ireland. The Resolution was carried by 216 to 114. The debate on the Bill was resumed on April 10th, and was continued on April 14th and 16th. The second reading was carried on the last day by 323 votes to 176; on May 2nd the Bill passed through Committee. It was opposed again on bringing up the Report, on May 5th, and was finally passed on May 21st, by 317 to 184. The Bill, after opposition, passed in the Lords on June 10th.]

I AM anxious to make a few observations on the principle on which I shall give my vote; because I shall be obliged to pass into the lobby along with a number of Members of the House from whose principles I entirely dissent; and after the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Bandon, I think that any one who votes with him has need to explain why he votes on his side, for anything more unlike the principles of the present day, more intolerant, or more insane with respect to the policy to be pursued towards Ireland, I have never heard; and I could not have believed that any man coming from that country could have used such language in addressing this House. I do not think that this question is to be looked at in a favourable or unfavourable light because of the party from which it comes. Some hon. Members have charged the right hon. Baronet with inconsistency, and have in some degree thrown the blame of his conduct on the measure which he has introduced. The right hon. Baronet has, from unfortunate circumstances, been connected in Opposition with a party of such a nature, that he could never promote any good measure whilst in power without being charged, and justly, with inconsistent conduct. But I will look at the measure as a measure by itself, and if it be a good measure I will vote for it as willingly, coming from the present Government, as if it came from the Government which preceded it. But I object to this measure on the ground that it is proposed to vote some of the public taxes for the purpose of maintaining an institution purely ecclesiastical, and for the rearing and edu-

and the Free Church; that which the State upholds being called by the complimentary name of the Residuary Church. After the experience of such State Churches, which have done so little good and so much evil, is this a time for establishing another Church? If I approved of Church endowments by the State I would vote for this Bill with all my heart, because it is calculated to create a kinder feeling towards this country amongst the people of Ireland.

Two parties opposed to the Bill are represented by hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. They state that the Roman Catholic religion should not be established or helped by the State. But when their Church is absorbing millions of the public money, while millions of their countrymen refuse to enter its doors, how can they for a moment object to the passing of a measure which will give some sort of show of assistance to that Church to which millions of the Irish people belong? The Nonconformist or Dissenting party in this country are opposed to the measure; but by some of them a spirit is mixed up with their agitation of this question which shows that they do not understand, or do not value, the great principles of Nonconformity, for which their forefathers struggled and suffered. I allude more especially to a portion of the Wesleyan body, which, I believe, does not altogether repudiate the principle of endowment.

But, with regard to the rest, I am persuaded that their agitation against this measure is honest. If the Dissenters look back to all that their forefathers have suffered, aye, even within a late period, they will be recreant to their own principles, and merit the contempt of the House and of the world, if they do not come forward manfully to uphold their own principles, and dissent from and oppose the measure under the consideration of the House. For myself, I shall oppose the Bill in every stage, simply on one ground, that I believe the principle of endowment to be most unjust and injurious to the country, and whatever may be the effect on any Government, whether that of the right hon. Baronet or any that has preceded or will succeed him, no strength of attachment to party or Government will induce me to tamper with what I hold to be the greatest and dearest principle which any man or any body of men can assert. When I look back to the history of this country, and consider its present condition, I must say, that all that the people possess of liberty has come, not through the portals of the cathedrals and the parish churches, but from the conventicles, which are despised by hon. Gentlemen opposite. When I know that if a good measure is to be carried in this House, it must be by men who are sent hither by the Nonconformists of Great Britain; when I read and see that the past and present State alliance with religion is hostile to religious liberty, preventing all growth and nearly destroying all vitality in religion itself, then I shall hold myself to have read, thought, and lived in vain, if I vote for a measure which in the smallest degree shall give any further power or life to the principle of State endowment; and, in conclusion, I will only exhort the Dissenters of England to act in the same way, and to stand upon their own great, pure, and unassailable principle; for, if they stand by it manfully, and work for it vigorously, the time may come, nay, it will come, when that principle will be adopted by the Legislature of the country.

IRELAND.

II.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, DECEMBER 13, 1847.

[Towards the conclusion of this year (1847) numerous crimes and outrages of a serious character were committed in Ireland. They were chiefly agrarian. In order to increase the powers of the Irish Executive, Parliament was invited in the Queen's Speech (Nov. 23) to take further precautions against the perpetration of crime in certain counties in Ireland. The Bill was moved by Sir George Grey on Nov. 29, and leave was given, by 224 votes to 18, was read a second time (296 to 19) on Dec. 9, and passed (174 to 14) on Dec. 13. It was passed in the House of Lords on Dec. 19. On July 31, 1848, the Irish Government proclaimed certain districts in which rebellion had broken out. Smith O'Brien and the other leaders of the insurgents were speedily arrested, tried, and convicted.]

I FEEL very much in the position of the hon. Member who has just addressed the House, for I am in some degree compelled to speak before this Bill is read a third time. I have presented a petition against the Bill, signed by more than 20,000 persons, inhabitants of the borough of Manchester, and I am unwilling to vote without briefly giving the reasons which make it impossible for me to oppose this Bill. When I recollect the circumstances attending the rejection of the Bill of 1846, for the protection of life in Ireland, I am convinced that the Government would not have brought forward the present measure if it had not appeared to them absolutely necessary, and that, but for this supposed necessity, it would never have been heard of.

The case of the Government, so far as the necessity for this Bill is concerned, seems to me to be as clear and as perfect as it can be. From the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Home Department, from the unanimous statements of all the newspapers, and from the evidence of all parties connected with Ireland, it is placed beyond a doubt that in the disturbed districts of Ireland the ordinary law is utterly powerless. The reason why the law is carried into effect in England is, because the feeling of the people is in favour of it, and every man is willing to become and is in reality a peace officer, in order to further the ends of justice.

But in Ireland this state of things does not exist. The public sentiment

in certain districts is depraved and thoroughly vitiated. [Mr. J. O'Connell: 'No! No!'] The hon. Member cries 'No, No;' but I maintain that in the disturbed districts the public or popular feeling is as I have described it. I do not mean to assert that all which the newspapers contain is true, or that they contain all the truth; but I ask the hon. Gentleman if he has not read accounts which are not contradicted, from which we learn that on the occurrence of some recent cases of assassination, whole districts have been in a state of rejoicing and exultation? These assassinations are not looked upon as murders, but rather as executions. Take the case of Mr. Lloyd, a clergyman, who was recently assassinated. There was no show of vindictive feeling on the part of his murderers; there was little of the character of ordinary murders in it. The servant was allowed to depart unharmed; a boy who was in the carriage was removed that he might not be injured; and the unhappy gentleman was shot with all the deliberation and the calmness with which a man would be made to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. It is clear, then, that the ordinary law fails, and that the Government have a case for the demand they make for an extension of the present powers of the law.

I do not say the present Bill will certainly be effective, but it is the less to be opposed because it does not greatly exceed or infringe the ordinary law; and it is the duty of the Legislature, when called upon to strengthen the Executive, to do so by the smallest possible infringement of the law and the constitution. But to leave the particular measure now before us, I am bound to say that the case of the Government with respect to their Irish policy in general is not as good as could be wished. The Government has not shown the courage which is necessary to deal effectually with the difficulties of Ireland. They should remember what passed when the Poor-law was proposed for that country. They were told it would be a failure—that it could not be worked; but disregarding these statements, they passed the Bill: and I believe, since the Act of 1829, no measure has passed this House of equal benefit to Ireland. The noble Lord at the head of the Government has said that all parties are to be blamed for the misgovernment of Ireland; but he should remember the responsibility which is upon him, for he is now in the position of dictator on Irish questions, and whatever he proposes for that country, I verily believe, will find no successful opposition in this House.

There is another fact to which I would call attention. The Irish Members complain, and very justly, of the past legislation of this House; but when we call to mind that there are 105 of them here, of whom 60 or 70 are of Liberal politics or opinions, and that about 30 of them are Repealers, and hold very strong views with regard to the mismanagement of Irish affairs in the Imperial Parliament, I think we have a right to complain that they have not laid on the table of the House any one measure which they believe to be necessary to the prosperity of their country.

I have been in this House more than four years, and I have never yet seen the Irish Members bringing forward any proposition of a practical character—nor am I aware that they have supported any measure they deemed necessary for Ireland, with unanimity and earnestness, or with anything like perseverance and resolution. I am sure that 105, or even 30 English Members, sitting in a Parliament in Dublin, and believing their country had suffered from the effects of bad legislation, would, by their knowledge of the case, their business habits, activity, union, and perseverance, have showed a powerful front, and by uniting together, and working manfully in favour of any proposition they might think necessary to remedy the evils of which they complained, they would have forced it on the attention of the House. But the Irish Members have not done this. So-

ar then, they are and have been as much to blame as any other Member of his House for the absence of good government in Ireland.

I will not, like them, complain of bad legislation, and propose no remedy. What is the condition of Ireland? Last year we voted millions to keep its population from starvation; and this year we have been asked for a further sum, but have not granted it. We maintain a large army in Ireland, and an armed police, which is an army in everything but in name, and yet we have in that country a condition of things which is not to be matched in any other civilized country on the face of the earth, and which is alike disgraceful to Ireland and to us. The great cause of Ireland's calamities is, that Ireland is idle. I believe it would be found, on inquiry, that the population of Ireland, as compared with that of England, do not work more than two days per week. Wherever a people are not industrious and are not employed, here is the greatest danger of crime and outrage. Ireland is idle, and therefore she starves; Ireland starves, and therefore she rebels. We must choose between industry and anarchy: we must have one or the other in Ireland. This proposition I believe to be incontrovertible, and I defy the House to give peace and prosperity to that country until they set in motion her industry, create and diffuse capital, and thus establish those gradations of rank and condition by which the whole social fabric can alone be held together.

But the idleness of the people of Ireland is not wholly their fault. It is for the most part a forced idleness, for it is notorious that when the Irish come to England, or remove to the United States or the Colonies, they are about the hardest working people in the world. We employ them down in Lancashire, and with the prospect of good pay they work about as well, and are as trustworthy, and quiet, and well-disposed to the law as the people of this country. The great secret of their idleness at home is, that there is little or no trade in Ireland; there are few flourishing towns to which the increasing population can resort for employment, so that there is a vast mass of people living on the land; and the land itself is not half so useful for their employment and sustentation as it might be. A great proportion of her skill, her strength, her sinews, and her labour, is useless to Ireland for the support of her population. Every year they have a large emigration, because there are a great number of persons with just enough means to transport themselves to other countries, who, finding it impossible to live at home in comfort, carry themselves and their capital out of Ireland; so that, year after year, she loses a large portion of those between the very poorest and the more wealthy classes of society, and with them many of the opportunities for the employment of labour.

I do not believe that the Bill for regulating the relations of landlord and tenant, as recommended by the hon. Member for the County of Limerick, will restore prosperity to Ireland. Such a measure may be passed with great advantage; but if it be intended by a Bill with this title to vest the ownership of the land in the present occupiers, I believe this House will never pass it, and if it did, that it would prove most fatal to the best interests of the country. I think we have a right to blame the Government that as yet we have not seen the Bill for the sale of encumbered estates in Ireland. I wish to ask why such a Bill is not ready before this? [*Lord John Russell*: 'The Bill has been ready a long time.'] The noble Lord says the Bill has been ready long ago; but that statement only makes the Government open to greater blame, for if the Bill is ready, why has it not been brought forward before this? Last Session the Bill was withdrawn, and the reason given was that landlords and mortgagees did not like it. If the Government wait till the landlords and mortgagees like it, it will never be brought forward at all. Had they

IRELAND.

III.

EMPLOYMENT OF THE POOR.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, AUGUST 25, 1848.

FROM the speeches that have been delivered in this debate, and from what we know of Ireland, it is clear that Ireland is so entirely disorganised, that it is extremely difficult to suggest any means by which relief can be extensively given without causing two evils: first, the waste of a great portion of the money which is granted; and next, the demoralization of a large number of those to whom the relief is given. It is on account of these difficulties that I am disposed to make great allowance for the measures which the Government have undertaken, as well as for any propositions which may be made by the hon. Member for Stroud, even when they appear somewhat inconsistent with correct economical principles.

As this is probably the last opportunity during this Session when the question of the condition of Ireland can be discussed, I am anxious to avail myself of it to offer a few observations to the House, and to explain briefly what I conceive to be the course which ought to be taken with regard to that country, to enable its population to place themselves in a position of comfort and independence. The past of Ireland is known to us all; it is a tale of idleness, and poverty, and periodical insurrection; the present of Ireland is like the past, except that at this moment all its ordinary evils are exhibited in an aggravated form. But there are one or two points with regard to this subject to which I wish especially to ask the attention of the House. Have you ever fully considered the effect which this state of things in Ireland has upon the condition of certain districts in England? We have had some threatenings of disturbances in England, and of disaffection—I hope it is not widespread—here and there in various parts of the country. Take the county of Lancaster as an example, and you will see something of the consequences of a large influx of the Irish population into that district. In Liverpool and Manchester, and in all the belt of towns which surround Manchester, there is a large Irish population—in fact, there is an Irish quarter in each of these towns. It is true that a great number of these persons are steady, respectable, and industrious, but it is notorious that a portion of them are, in some degree, the opposite of all this. They bring to this country all the vices which have prevailed so long in Ireland; their influence on the people

of Lancashire is often of an unfavourable character, and the effect of their example on the native population must necessarily be injurious. We find that crimes attended with violence prevail too generally in Lancashire and Yorkshire. These crimes to a large extent are committed by persons who are not natives of those counties, but who come from Ireland, because it is impossible for them to find subsistence in that country.

There is another point which seems to me important. Driven forth by poverty, Irishmen emigrate in great numbers, and in whatever quarter of the world an Irishman sets his foot, there stands a bitter, an implacable enemy of England. That is one of the results of the widespread disaffection that exists in Ireland. There are hundreds of thousands—I suppose there are millions—of the population of the United States of America who are Irish by birth, or by immediate descent; and be it remembered, Irishmen settled in the United States have a large influence in public affairs. They sometimes sway the election of Members of the Legislature, and may even affect the election of the President of the Republic. There may come a time when questions of a critical nature will be agitated between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States; and it is certain that at such a time the Irish in that country will throw their whole weight into the scale against this country, and against peace with this country. These are points which it is necessary to consider, and which arise out of the lamentable condition in which Ireland is placed.

When we reflect for a moment upon the destitution which millions of our countrymen suffer in that unfortunate island, the conclusion is inevitable that either the Government or the people of Ireland are in fault. I think both are in fault. I think the Government has been negligent of Ireland. I do not mean the present Government in particular; for they are fully as anxious for the welfare of Ireland as any former Administration has been—but I think the Government generally has been negligent of Ireland. It is a common thing to hear it said, and especially by Gentlemen sitting on the Treasury bench, that the remedy for Irish evils is difficult, and that the difficulty seems insurmountable; but the House may rest assured that no difficulty can be so great as that which must be met if no remedy is applied. To do anything that can be effectual, must be infinitely less dangerous than to do nothing.

Now I believe the real difficulties which beset this question do not arise from anything in Ireland, so much as from the constitution of the Government. This House, and the other House of Parliament, are almost exclusively aristocratic in their character. The Administration is therefore necessarily the same, and on the Treasury benches aristocracy reigns supreme. No fewer than seven Members of the Cabinet are Members of the House of Lords; and every other Member of it is either a Lord by title, or on the very threshold of the peerage by birth or marriage. I am not blaming them for this; it may even be that from neither House of Parliament can fourteen better men be chosen to fill their places. But I maintain that in the present position of Ireland, and looking at human nature as it is, it is not possible that fourteen Gentlemen, circumstanced as they are, can meet round the Council table, and with unbiassed minds fairly discuss the question of Ireland, as it now presents itself to this House, to the country, and to the world.

The condition of Ireland requires two kinds of remedies—one political, the other social; and it is hard to tell where the one ends and the other begins. I will speak first of the political remedies. At present, there prevails throughout three-fourths of the Irish people a total unbelief in the honesty and integrity of the Government of this country. There may or may not be good grounds for all this ill feeling; but that it exists, no man acquainted

with Ireland will deny. The first step to be taken is to remove this feeling; and, to do this, some great measure or measures should be offered to the people of Ireland, which will act as a complete demonstration to them that bygones are to be bygones, with regard to the administration of Irish affairs, and that henceforth new, generous, and equal principles of government are to be adopted.

I have on a former occasion stated my opinions on one or two subjects, and I will venture again briefly to explain them to the House. Ireland has long been a country of jars and turmoil, and its jars have arisen chiefly from religious dissensions. In respect of matters of religion she has been governed in a manner totally unknown in England and Scotland. If Ireland has been rightly governed—if it has been wise and just to maintain the Protestant Church established there, you ought, in order to carry out your system, to establish Prelacy in Scotland, and Catholicism in England; though, if you were to attempt to do either the one or the other, it would not be a sham but a real insurrection that you would provoke. There must be equality between the great religious sects in Ireland—between Catholic and Protestant. It is impossible that this equality can be much longer denied.

It is suspected that it is the intention of the Government to bring forward at no distant day, if they can catch the people of England napping, a proposition for paying the Roman Catholic priests of Ireland. On more than one ground I should object to any such scheme. In the first place, I believe the Government cannot, from any funds they possess, or from any they can obtain, place the Catholic priests on an equality with the ministers of the Protestant Church; and if they cannot do that in every respect, the thing is not worth attempting. They will, I think, find it infinitely more easy, and it will certainly be much more in accordance with political justice and with the true interests of religion, to withdraw from Ireland the Church Establishment which now exists there, and to bring about the perfect equality which may be secured by taking away so much of the funds as are proved to be totally unnecessary for the wants of the population. I do not mean that you should withdraw from the Protestant Church every sixpence now in its possession; what I mean is, that you should separate it from the State, and appropriate all the funds of which it might justly be deprived to some grand national object, such as the support and extension of the system of education now established in Ireland; an appropriation of money which would, I am sure, produce in the minds of the people of Ireland an entire change of feeling with regard to the legislation of Parliament in relation to their country.

With regard to the Parliamentary representation of Ireland, having recently spent seventy-three days in an examination of the subject, whilst serving as a member of the Dublin Election Committee, I assert most distinctly that the representation which exists at this moment is a fraud; and I believe it would be far better if there were no representation at all, because the people would not then be deluded by the idea that they had a representative Government to protect their interests. The number of taxes which the people have to pay, in order to secure either the municipal or Parliamentary franchise, is so great that it is utterly impossible for the constituencies to be maintained, and for public opinion—the honest, real opinion of intelligent classes in Ireland—to obtain any common or decent degree of representation in the Imperial Legislature. I feel quite confident that in the next Session of Parliament, the questions of religious equality in Ireland and of Irish representation must receive a much more serious attention than they have obtained in any past Session.

I come now to those social questions which must also receive the attention

of Parliament; for if they do not, the political remedies will, after all, be of very little permanent use. I advocate these political changes on the ground, not that they will feed the hungry or employ the idle, but that they will be as oil thrown upon the waters, and will induce the people no longer to feel themselves treated as a conquered race. It is agreed on all sides that the social remedies which are immediately possible to us, are those having reference to the mode in which the land of Ireland is owned, or held and cultivated—perhaps 'not cultivated' would be a more correct expression. The noble Lord at the head of the Government has alluded to parts of Ireland in which it is impossible that the land as at present held, or the rates which can be collected, can find relief or sustentation for the people. It is a notorious fact, that there are vast tracts of land in Ireland, which, if left in the hands of nominal and bankrupt owners, will never to the end of time support the population which ought to live upon them. And it is on this ground that I must question the policy of measures for expending public money with a view to the cultivation and reclamation of these lands.

The true solution of this matter is to get the lands out of the hands of men who are the nominal, and not the real, possessors. But Parliament maintains laws which act most injuriously in this particular. The law and practice of entails tends to keep the soil in large properties, and in the hands of those who cannot perform their duty to it. It will be said that entails exist in Scotland and in England. Yes; but this Session a law has passed, or is passing, to modify the system as it has heretofore existed in Scotland; and in England many of its evils have been partially overcome by the extraordinary, and, to some degree, the accidental extension of manufacturing industry among the people. In Ireland there are no such mitigations; a code of laws exists, under which it is impossible for the land and the people to be brought, as it were, together, and for industry to live in independence and comfort, instead of crawling to this House, as it does almost annually, to ask alms of the hardworking people of England.

The law and practice of primogeniture is another evil of the same character. It is a law unnatural and unjust at all times; but in the present condition of Ireland it cannot much longer be endured. Were I called upon—and it is a bold figure of speech to mention such a thing—but were I called upon to treat this Irish question, I would establish, for a limited period at least, a special court in Ireland to adjudicate on all questions connected with the titles and transfers of landed property. This court should finally decide questions of title; it should prepare and enforce a simple and short form of conveyance, as short almost as that by which railway stock is transferred; and, without regard to the public revenue, I would abolish every farthing of expense which is now incurred in the duties on stamps, for the purpose of facilitating the distribution of land in Ireland, and of allowing the capital and industry of the people to work out its salvation. All this is possible; and, more than this, it is all necessary. Well, now, what is the real obstacle in our path? You have toiled at this Irish difficulty Session after Session, and some of you have grown almost from boyhood to greyheaded old men since it first met you in your legislative career, and yet there is not in ancient or modern history a picture so humiliating as that which Ireland presents to the world at this moment; and there is not an English gentleman who, if he crossed the Channel in the present autumn, and travelled in any foreign country, would not wish to escape from any conversation among foreigners in which the question of the condition of Ireland was mooted for a single moment.

Let the House, if it can, regard Ireland as an English country. Let us think of the eight millions of people, and of the millions of them doomed to

this intolerable suffering. Let us think of the half-million who, within two years past, have perished miserably in the workhouses, and on the highways, and in their hovels—more, far more than ever fell by the sword in any war this country ever waged; let us think of the crop of nameless horrors which is even now growing up in Ireland, and whose disastrous fruit may be gathered in years and generations to come. Let us examine what are the laws and the principles under which alone God and nature have permitted that nations should become industrious and provident.

I hope the House will pardon me if I have said a word that can offend any one. But I feel conscious of a personal humiliation when I consider the state of Ireland. I do not wish to puff nostrums of my own, though it may be thought I am opposed to much that exists in the present order of things; but whether it tended to advance democracy, or to uphold aristocracy, or any other system, I would wish to fling to the winds any prejudice I have entertained, and any principle that may be questioned, if I can thereby do one single thing to hasten by a single day the time when Ireland shall be equal to England in that comfort and that independence which an industrious people may enjoy, if the Government under which they live is equal and just.

IRELAND.

IV.

RATE IN AID.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 2, 1849.

[On February 7, 1849, a proposal was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that a sum of 50,000*l.* should be granted to certain Irish Unions, in which distress was more than usually prevalent. The resolution was passed on March 3. On March 27 the second reading of the Bill founded on this resolution was moved, and the debate continued till April 3, when the second reading was affirmed by 193 votes to 138. The third reading was carried by 129 to 55, on April 30. The Bill passed the House of Lords on May 18.]

I VENTURED to move the adjournment of the debate on Friday night, because I was anxious to have the opportunity of expressing the opinions which I entertain on this most important subject. I am one of the Committee appointed by this House to inquire into the working of the Irish poor-law, and on that Committee I was one of the majority—the large majority—by which the resolution for a rate in aid was affirmed. In the division which took place on the same proposition in the House, I also voted in the majority. But I am not by any means disposed to say that there are no reasons against the course which I take, or against the proposition which has been submitted to the House by the Government. On the whole, however, I am prepared to-night to justify that proposition, and the vote which I have given for it.

As to the project of raising money for the purpose of these distressed Unions, I think there can be no doubt in the mind of any Member of the House, that money must come from some quarter. It appears to be a question of life or money. All the witnesses who were examined before the Committee; the concurrent testimony of all parties in Ireland, of all the public papers, of all the speeches which have been delivered in the course of this debate, go to prove, that unless additional funds be provided, tens of thousands of our unfortunate fellow-countrymen in Ireland must perish of famine in the course of the present year. If this be true, it is evident that a great necessity is upon us, a grave emergency, which we must meet. I am not prepared to justify the proposition of a rate in aid merely on the ground of this necessity, because it will be said, and justly, that the same amount of funds might be raised by some other mode; but I am prepared to justify the proposition which restricts this rate in

aid to Ireland, on the ground that the rest of the United Kingdom has, during the past three years, paid its own rate in aid for Ireland; and this to a far larger amount than any call which the Government now proposes to make on the rateable property in Ireland.

We have taken from the general taxation of this country, in the last two or three years, for the purposes of Ireland, several millions, I may say not fewer than from eight to ten millions sterling. We have paid also very large subscriptions from private resources, to the same purpose; the sums expended by the British Association were not less, in the aggregate, than 600,000*l.*, in addition to other large amounts contributed. The Irish, certainly, gave something to these funds; but by far the larger amount was paid by the tax-paying classes of Great Britain. In addition to this special outlay for this purpose, very heavy local taxation has been incurred by several of the great communities of this island, for the purpose of supporting the pauperism which has escaped from Ireland to Great Britain. In this metropolis, in Glasgow, in Liverpool, and in the great manufacturing town which I have the honour to represent, the overflow of Irish pauperism has, within the last two or three years more especially, occasioned a vast additional burden of taxation. I believe the hon. Member for South Lancashire made some statement in this House on a former occasion with respect to the burden which was inflicted upon Liverpool by the Irish paupers, who constantly flow into that town. As to Glasgow, the poor-rate levied last year in the city parish alone, amounted to 70,000*l.*; and this year, owing to the visitation of cholera and the poverty thereby engendered, there will be an additional assessment of 20,000*l.* The city parish contains only about 120,000 or 130,000 of the 280,000 residents in the mass of buildings known by the general name of Glasgow. Of the sum levied as poor-rate in the city parish, it is estimated that, on an average, two-thirds are spent upon Irish paupers. The ranks of these Irish paupers are recruited to a comparatively small extent from the Irish workmen, who have been, with their families, attracted by, and who have found employment in, the numerous manufactories of Glasgow. The Irish paupers, upon whom two-thirds of the Glasgow poor-rates are spent, are principally squalid and destitute creatures who are brought over as deck passengers, clustering like bees to the bulwarks and rigging, by almost every steamer that sails from a northern Irish port. With respect to the town of Manchester, I am able to give some more definite particulars as to the burthen imposed upon the inhabitants for the support of the Irish casual poor. In the year 1848, the sum expended in the relief of the settled poor, which term includes the resident Irish who are not distinguished by name from the English, amounted to 37,847*l.* The sum expended for the relief of the non-settled English paupers in the town of Manchester, in the year 1848, was 18,699*l.* The amount expended for the relief of casual Irish poor alone was 28,007*l.* The total assessment of Manchester is 647,568*l.*, which, if divided by the amount required to relieve the casual Irish poor, would amount to a rate of 10½*d.* in the pound upon every pound of rateable property in the town of Manchester; but if estimated according to the property really rated (as there are great numbers of persons who, from poverty, do not pay the poor-rates on the property they occupy), the amount of assessment for the relief of the casual Irish poor alone will be from 15*d.* to 18*d.* in the pound, and the charge upon the ratepayers of Manchester for the relief of the Irish casual poor during the last year is not less than 2*s.* 1*d.* per head upon the whole population of that town.

Now, during the last year, Manchester had to struggle with very severe difficulties, and the manufacturers there suffered most acutely from various causes. The failure of the cotton crop of 1846, the panic in the financial and commercial

world in 1847, the convulsions in the European States in 1848—all these contributed to bring upon Manchester enormous evil; and in addition to this we had to bear an additional burden of 28,000*l.* for the maintenance of the casual Irish poor. I have here an analysis of the poor-rates collected in Manchester during the last four years, and I will briefly state the results to the House. In the year 1845 the amount of rates collected expressly for the relief of the casual Irish poor was 3,500*l.* In 1846 the cost of the casual Irish poor imposed a burden upon Manchester of 3,300*l.*; in 1847 of 6,558*l.*; and in 1848 this item of expenditure reached the extraordinary sum of 28,007*l.* The people of Manchester have uttered no loud or clamorous complaints respecting the excessive burden borne by them for the support of the Irish. They have sent no urgent deputations to the Government on the subject of this heavy expense. But, seeing that they have paid this money for the relief of Irish paupers, and seeing also that the smaller manufacturing and other towns in England have also paid no small sums for Irish paupers, they do think, and I here express my conviction, that it will be seen and admitted that we have paid our rate in aid for the relief of Ireland, and that it does become the landowners and persons of property in that country to make an effort during a temporary period to supply that small sum which is by this Bill demanded of them.

I will now say a few words regarding the province of Ulster. An hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for Londonderry, who made a not very civil speech, so far as it regarded persons who entertain the same opinions generally which I profess, seemed to allege that there was no party so tyrannical as those who wished to carry this rate in aid, and that no body of men on earth were so oppressed as the unfortunate proprietors of Ulster. [Mr. Bateson: 'The farmers of Ulster.'] I have made a calculation, the result of which is, that, with the population of Ulster, a 6*d.* rate would be 82,000*l.* a-year, or 164,000*l.* for the two years during which they will be required to pay towards the support of their fellow-countrymen in the south and west. If I were an Ulster proprietor, I would not have raised my voice against such a proposition, because it is not a state of things of an ordinary character, nor are these proprietors called on to do that which nobody else has done before them. Neither were they called upon before other sources had been applied to. Had I been an Ulster proprietor, I would rather have left this House than have taken the course they have pursued in denouncing this measure. As to the farmers of Ulster, they would not have raised this opposition had they not been instigated to do so by hon. Members in this House, and by the proprietors in that province, whom they represented. It appears by the reports of the inspectors under the poor-law, that where there has been a difficulty in collecting rates, and the people have refused to pay, they have followed the example of the higher and landlord class; and the conduct of that class in many cases has been such as to render the collection extremely difficult. [Mr. Bateson: 'Not in Ulster.'] I do not speak of Ulster particularly in this instance, but the case has occurred in other places; but happily for Ulster the burden has not proved so serious in that province.

I have heard a good deal said respecting the resignation of Mr. Twisleton, who preferred giving up his situation to supporting the rate in aid. But the reasons assigned by Mr. Twisleton destroy the importance of his own act. He did not insist upon the question whether Ulster was able to bear the rate in aid; but his objection was that Ulster was Ulster, and more Ulster than it was Ireland. He said Ulster preferred being united with England, rather than with Leinster, Connaught, and Munster; in short, that Ulster was unwilling to be made a part of Ireland. Now, if this Bill can succeed in making Ulster a part of

Ireland in interests and sympathies, I think it will be attended with a very happy result, and one that will compensate for some portion of the present misfortunes of Ireland.

But the hon. Member also, in another part of his speech, charged the Government with having caused the calamities of Ireland. Now, if I were the hon. Member, I would not have opened up that question. My opinion is, that the course which Parliament has taken with respect to Ireland for upwards of a century, and especially since the Union, has been in accordance with the wishes of the proprietors of the land of that country. If, therefore, there has been misgovernment in Ireland during that period, it is the land which has influenced Parliament, and the landowners are responsible. I do not mean to say that the House of Commons is not responsible for taking the evil advice which the landowners of Ireland have proffered; but what I mean to assert is, that this advice has been almost invariably acted upon by the Government. This it is which has proved fatal to the interests of Ireland; the Ulster men have stood in the way of improvements in the Franchise, in the Church, and in the Land question; they have purchased Protestant ascendency, and the price paid for it is the ruin and degradation of their country. So much for the vote which I am about to give in support of the rate in aid.

In the next place, I must observe that if an income tax were to be substituted for a rate in aid, I think I could show substantial reasons why it would not be satisfactory. In the first place, I take an objection to the imposition of an income tax for the express purpose of supporting paupers. This, I apprehend, is a fatal objection at the outset. I understand that there has been a document issued by a Committee in another place, which has reported favourably for the substitution of an income tax in lieu of the rate in aid. I always find that if a proposition is brought forward by the Government to impose a new tax, it is always for a tax which is disliked, and I conclude, that if an income tax for Ireland had been proposed instead of the rate in aid, that would have been repudiated with quite as much vigour as the proposition now before the House.

And now I will address a few words to the general question of Ireland, which I think may be fairly entered upon in this debate after the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth. What have we been doing all the Session? With the exception of the Jewish Oaths Bill, and the Navigation Laws, our attention has been solely taken up with Irish matters. From the incessant recurrence of the Irish debate, it would seem, either that the wrongs and evils endured by the Irish people are incurable, or else that we lack statesmen. I always find that, whoever happens to sit on the other side of the table, he always has some scheme to propose for the regeneration of Ireland. The noble Lord on the Treasury bench had his schemes for that purpose when he was seated opposite. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth now has his scheme to propose, and if he can succeed in it, he will not only have the universal wish of the nation in his favour, but the noble Lord also who is at the head of the Government will not, I am sure, object to give way to any man who will settle the Irish question. But the treatment of this Irish malady remains ever the same. We have nothing for it still but force and alms. You have an armed force there of 50,000 men to keep the people quiet, large votes are annually required to keep the people quiet, and large votes are annually required to keep the people alive. I presume the government by troops is easy, and that the

'Civil power may snore at ease,
While soldiers fire—to keep the peace.'

But the noble Lord at the head of the Government has no policy to propose for Ireland. If he had, he would have told us what it is before now. The

poor-law as a means of regenerating Ireland is a delusion. So is the rate in aid. I do not believe in the regenerating power either of the poor-law or of the rate in aid. There may occur cases where farmers will continue to employ labourers for the mere purpose of preventing them from coming on the poor-rates, but these are exceptions. If the desire of gain will not cause the employment of capital, assuredly poor-rates will not. A poor-law adds to pauperism, by inviting to idleness. It drags down the man who pays, and demoralises him who receives. It may expose, it may temporarily relieve, it will increase, but it can never put an end to pauperism. The poor-law and the rate in aid are, therefore, utterly unavailing for such a purpose.

It is the absence of all demand for labour that constitutes the real evil of Ireland. In the distressed Unions a man's labour is absolutely worth nothing. It is not that the Irish people will not work. I spoke to an Irish navigator the other day respecting his work, and I asked him why his countrymen did not work in their own country. 'Give them 2*s.* 8*d.* a-day,' said he, 'and you will find plenty who will work.' There exists in Ireland a lamentable want of employment. The land there enjoys a perpetual sabbath. If the people of Ireland were set to work, they would gain their subsistence; but if this course is not adopted, they must either continue to be supported out of the taxes, or else be left to starve. In order to show how great is the general poverty in Ireland, I will read a statement of the comparative amount of legacy duty paid in the two countries. In England, in the year 1844, the amount of capital on which legacy duty was paid was 44,393,887*l.*; in Ireland, in 1845, the amount of capital on which legacy duty was paid was 2,140,021*l.*—the population of the latter being nearly one-half of the former, whilst the proportion between the capital paying legacy duty is only one-twentieth. In 1844, the legacy duty paid in England was 1,124,435*l.*, with a population of 16,000,000; in Scotland it was 74,116*l.*, with a population of 3,000,000; whilst Ireland paid only 53,618*l.*, with a population of 8,000,000. These facts offer the strongest possible proof of the poverty of Ireland.

On looking over the reports of the Poor-law Inspectors, I find them teeming with statements of the wretchedness which prevails in the distressed districts of Ireland. The general character of the reports is, that starvation is, literally speaking, gradually driving the population into their graves. The people cannot quit their hovels for want of clothing, whilst others cannot be discharged from the workhouses owing to the same cause. Men are seen wearing women's apparel, not being able to procure proper clothing; whilst, in other instances, men, women, and children are all huddled together under bundles of rags, unable to rise for lack of covering; workhouses and prisons are crowded beyond their capacity to contain, the mortality being very great in them. Persons of honest character commit thefts in order to be sent to prison, and some ask, as a favour, to be transported.

I know of nothing like this in the history of modern times. The only parallel I can find to it is in the work of the great German author (Mosheim), who, in his Institutes of the Christian Religion, speaking of the inroads of the barbarians into the Roman empire in the fifth century, says that in Gaul, the calamities of the times drove many to such madness, that they wholly excluded God from the government of the world, and denied His providence over human affairs. It would almost appear that this state of things is now to be seen in Ireland. The prisons are crowded, the chapels deserted, society is disorganized and ruined; labour is useless, for capital is not to be had for its employment. The reports of the Inspectors say that this catastrophe has only been hastened, and not originated, by the failure of the potato crop during the last four years, and that all men possessed of any intel-

ligence must have foreseen what would ultimately happen.

This being the case, in what manner are the Irish people to subsist in future? There is the land, and there is labour enough to bring it into cultivation. But such is the state in which the land is placed, that capital cannot be employed upon it. You have tied up the raw material in such a manner—you have created such a monopoly of land by your laws and your mode of dealing with it, as to render it alike a curse to the people and to the owners of it. Why, let me ask, should land be tied up any more than any other raw material? If the supply of cotton wool were limited to the hands of the Browns and the Barings, what would be the condition of the Lancashire manufactories? What the manufactories would be under such a monopoly, the land in the county of Mayo actually is under the system which prevails with respect to it in Ireland. But land carries with it territorial influence, which the Legislature will not interfere with lest it should be disturbed. Land is sacred, and must not be touched.

The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade will understand what I mean when I allude to the Land Improvement Company which the Legislature is ready to charter for Ireland, but which it fears to suffer to exist in England, lest the territorial influence which ever accompanies the possession of landed estates should be lost or diminished. But one of the difficulties to which a remedy must be applied is the defective titles, which cannot easily be got rid of under the present system of entails. This is one of the questions to which the House of Commons must very soon give its serious attention. Then there comes the question of settlements. Now, I do not say there ought not to be any settlements; but what I mean to say is, that they are so bound up and entangled with the system of entails as to present insuperable difficulties in the way of dealing with land as a marketable commodity. I have here an Opinion which I will read to the House, which I find recorded as having been given by an eminent counsel: it is quoted in Hayes' work on Conveyancing, and the Opinion was given on the occasion of a settlement on the marriage of a gentleman having a fee-simple estate:—

'The proposals extend to a strict settlement by the gentleman upon the first and other sons of the marriage. It will appear from the preceding observations, that where the relative circumstances are such as in the present case, a strict settlement of the gentleman's estate does not ordinarily enter into the arrangement, which begins and ends with his taking the lady's fortune, and imposing an equivalent pecuniary charge upon his estate (for her personal benefit). The proposals seldom go further, unless there is hereditary rank or title to be supported, or it is in contemplation to found a family. The former of those two circumstances do not exist in this case, and the latter would require the settlement of the bulk of the estates. The policy of such settlements is extremely questionable. It is difficult to refer them, in the absence of both the motives already indicated, to any rational principle. The present possessor has absolute dominion; his character is known, his right unquestionable. He is asked to reduce himself to a mere tenant for life in favour of an unborn son, of whose character nothing can be predicted, and who, if he can be said to have any right, cannot possibly have a preferable right. At no very distant period the absolute dominion must be confided to somebody—and why should confidence be reposed in the unborn child rather than the living parent? Such a settlement has no tendency to protect or benefit the father, whose advantage and comfort ought first to be consulted. It does not shield him from the consequences of his own imprudence. On the contrary, if his expenditure should in any instance exceed his income, he—as a mere tenant for life—is in danger of being obliged to borrow on annuity, a process which, once begun, proceeds generally and almost necessarily to the exhaustion of the life

income. The son may be an idiot or a spendthrift. He may be tempted to raise money by *post obit*. If to these not improbable results we add all the family feuds generated between the tenant for life and remainder-man, in regard to the management and enjoyment by the former of that estate which was once his own, particularly with reference to cutting timber, the disadvantages of thus fettering the dominion will appear greatly to preponderate. At best, a settlement is a speculation; at worst, it is the occasion of distress, profligacy, and domestic discord, ending not unfrequently, as the Chancery Reports bear witness, in obstinate litigation, ruinous alike to the peace and to the property of the family. Sometimes the father effects an arrangement with his eldest son on his coming of age; the son stipulating for an immediate provision in the shape of an annuity, the father for a gross sum to satisfy his creditors, or to portion his younger children, and for a re-settlement of the estate. This arrangement, perhaps, is brought about by means, or imposes terms, which, in the eye of equity, render it a fraud upon the son; and here we have another source of litigation.'

Now, what I have here read is exactly that which everybody's experience tells us is the fact, and we have recently had a notable case which exactly answers to that referred to in the last paragraph of this Opinion. The practice of making settlements of this description is mischievous—leads to endless litigation—and sooner or later the landed classes must sink under it.

The Irish proprietors have also another difficulty to contend with, and that is their extravagance. It is said—for I cannot vouch for the fact myself—that they keep too many horses and dogs. I do not mean to say that an Irish gentleman may not spend his rents as he pleases; but I can say that he cannot both spend his money and have it too. I think if they would cast their pride on one side, and go honestly to work—if, instead of their young men spending their time 'waiting for a commission,' they were to go into business, they would be far better and more usefully employed, and they would find that the less humiliating condition of the two. Another bane of Ireland is the prevalence of life interests in landed property there. Under such a system the land can neither be improved nor sold. Now what has the noble Lord at the head of the Government done towards grappling with all these questions? Nothing—absolutely nothing. I think him very unwise in not propounding to himself the momentous question, 'What shall be done for Ireland?' The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth has a plan. He entered upon its outline on Friday last. But I doubt whether it has yet taken that distinct form which it must assume in order that the House may take cognisance of it. I admire some of the measures which the right hon. Baronet intimates he would carry into effect, but there are other parts of his proposals which are vague and impracticable. I think, if it is believed in Ireland that a Commission is to be appointed to take charge of the distressed Unions of the south and west—that the whole thing is to be managed through a new department of the Government, and all without the slightest trouble to the landlords—that there will be more than ever a clinging to this wretched property in bankrupt estates, and more than ever an indisposition to adopt those measures which are still open to them, in the direction in which the right hon. Baronet wishes to proceed.

The right hon. Baronet stated in his first speech on this topic, that he did not wish the transfer of property to be by individual barter; and on Friday he stated that he was very much averse to allowing matters to go on in their natural course, for by that means land would be unnaturally cheapened. Well, but upon what conditions would the right hon. Baronet buy land in Ireland? would it be under the same circumstances, and at the same price, that he would buy an estate in Yorkshire or

Staffordshire? If any sane man goes to the west or south of Ireland to purchase an estate, he must go on account of the cheapness of the bargain—a cheapness which he hopes will compensate him for all the disadvantages to which he must necessarily be subjected in such a purchase. There can be no redemption for that part of Ireland—if it is to be through the transfer of land—except the land take its natural course, and come so cheap into the market that Englishmen and Scotchmen, and Irishmen too having capital, will be willing to purchase it, notwithstanding all its disadvantages. [Colonel Dunne: 'Hear, hear!'] The hon. Member for Portarlington cheers that, as if it were an extraordinary statement. If the hon. Member prefers purchasing what is dear to what is cheap, he is not a very sensible man to legislate for Ireland. If he thinks that a man will go into Galway and pay as much per acre for an estate as he would in England, he is greatly mistaken; but the fact is, I believe, that not only English and Scotch capital, but that much Irish capital also, would be expended in the purchase of estates in the south and west, if the ends which the right hon. Baronet has in view were facilitated by this House.

But we have a case in point which affords us some guidance upon this question, and it is a case with which the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, and the right hon. Baronet the Member for Ripon, are very familiar. I allude to the case of Stockport in 1842. Owing to a variety of circumstances—I will not go into the question of the Corn-law, as that is settled—but owing to a variety of circumstances, from 1838 to 1842 there was a continued sinking in the condition of Stockport—its property depreciated to a lamentable extent. One man left property, as he thought, worth 80,000*l.* or 90,000*l.* Within two years it sold for little more than 20,000*l.* Since that time the son of one man, then supposed to be a person of large property, has had relief from the parochial funds. In 1842 the amount of the poor-rate averaged from 7*s.* to 8*s.* in the pound. From November 4, 1841, to May 30, 1842, the rates levied were 6*s.* in the pound, realising the amount of 19,144*l.* From January 28, 1843, to August 2 of the same year, the rates levied were 7*s.* in the pound, and the amount raised was 21,948*l.* And bear in mind that at that time Stockport was in process of depopulation—many thousands quitted the place—whole streets were left with scarcely a tenant in them—some public-houses, previously doing a large business, were let for little more than their rates; in fact, Stockport was as fair a representative of distress amongst a manufacturing community as Mayo, Galway, or any western county of Ireland can be at this moment of distress amongst an agricultural community.

Now what was done in Stockport? There was a Commission of Inquiry, which the then Home Secretary appointed. They made an admirable report, the last paragraph of which ought to be read by every one who wishes to know the character of the people of Stockport. Mr Twisleton, speaking of them, said that they were a noble people; and truly the exertions which they made to avoid becoming chargeable upon the rates were heroic. Well now, all this suffering was going on—the workhouses were crowded, the people were emigrating, there was a general desolation, and if it had not been for the harvest of 1842, which was a good one, and the gradual recovery of trade which followed, nothing in Ireland can be worse than the condition of Stockport would have been. What was the result? Property was greatly depreciated, and much of it changed hands. Something like half the manufacturers failed, and, of course, gave up business altogether. My hon. Friend the Member for Stockport purchased property in the borough at that period, and since then he has laid out not far short of a hundred thousand pounds, in a very large manufacturing establishment in

that town. In fact, the persons who are now carrying on the manufacturing business in Stockport are of a more substantial character than those who were swept away by the calamities of 1842. This is a very sorrowful process. I can feel as much for those persons as any man; but we must all submit to circumstances such as these when they come.

There are vicissitudes in all classes of society, and in all occupations in which we may engage; and when we have, as now in Ireland, a state of things—a grievous calamity not equalled under the sun,—it is the duty of this House not to interfere with the ordinary and natural course of remedy, and not to flinch from what is necessary for the safety of the people by reason of any mistaken sympathy with the owners of cotton mills or with the proprietors of landed estates. Now, I want Parliament to remove every obstacle in the way of the free sale of land. I believe that in this policy lies the only security you have for the restoration of the distressed districts of Ireland. The question of a Parliamentary title is most important; but I understand that the difficulty of this arises from the system of entails beyond persons now living, and because you must go back through a long search of sixty years before you can make it quite clear that the title is absolutely secure. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth suggested that the Lord Chancellor should be ousted. I proposed last year that there should be a new court established in Ireland, for the adjudication of cases connected with land, and for no other purpose, and that it should thus relieve the present courts from much of the business with which they are now encumbered. But I do not say that even such a court would effect much good, unless it were very much more speedy in its operations than the existing courts. I believe that the present Lord Chancellor is admitted to be as good a Judge as ever sat in the Court of Chancery; but he is rather timid as a Minister, and inert as a statesman; and, if I am not mistaken, he was in a great measure responsible for the failure of the Bill for facilitating the sale of encumbered estates last Session. The Government must have known, as well as I do, that such a measure could not succeed, and that the clause which was introduced—on the third reading, I believe—made it impossible to work it.

There is another point, with regard to intestate estates. I feel how tenderly one must speak, in this House, upon a question like this. Even the right hon. Member for Tamworth, with all his authority, appeared, when touching on this delicate question of the land, as if he were walking upon eggs which he was very much afraid of breaking. I certainly never heard the right hon. Gentleman steer through so many sinuosities in a case; and hardly, at last, dared he come to the question, because he was talking about land—this sacred land! I believe land to have nothing peculiar in its nature which does not belong to other property; and everything that we have done with the view of treating land differently from other property has been a blunder—a false course which we must retrace—an error which lies at the foundation of very much of the pauperism and want of employment which so generally prevail. Now, with regard to intestate estates, I am told that the House of Lords will never repeal the law of primogeniture; but I do not want them to repeal the law of primogeniture in the sense entertained by some people. I do not want them to enact the system of France, by which a division of property is compelled. I think that to force the division of property by law is just as contrary to sound principles and natural rights as to prevent its division, as is done by our law. If a man choose to act the unnatural and absurd part of leaving the whole of his property to one child, I should not, certainly, look with respect upon his memory; but I would not interfere to prevent the free exercise of his will. I think, however, if a man die by chance without a will,

that it is the duty of the Government to set a high moral example, and to divide the property equally among the children of the former owner, or among those who may be said to be his heirs—among those, in fact, who would fairly participate in his personal estate. If that system of leaving all to the eldest were followed out in the case of personalty, it would lead to immediate confusion, and, by destroying the whole social system, to a perfect anarchy of property. Why, then, should that course be followed with regard to land? The repeal of the law would not of necessity destroy the custom; but this House would no longer give its sanction to a practice which is bad; and I believe that gradually there would be a more just appreciation of their duties in this respect by the great body of testators.

Then, with regard to life interests: I would make an alteration there. I think that life-owners should be allowed to grant leases—of course, only on such terms as should ensure the successor from fraud—and that estates should be permitted to be charged with the sums which were expended in their improvement. Next, with regard to the registry of land. In many European countries this is done; and high legal authorities affirm that it would not be difficult to accomplish it in this country. You have your Ordnance Survey. To make the Survey necessary for a perfect registry of deeds throughout the kingdom, would not cost more than *9d.* an acre; and if you had your plans engraved, it would be no great addition to the expense. There can be no reason why the landowners should not have that advantage conferred upon them, because, in addition to the public benefit, it would increase the value of their lands by several years' purchase. Mr. Senior has stated, that if there were the same ready means for the transfer of land as at present exist for the transfer of personalty, the value of land would be increased, if I mistake not, by nine years' purchase. This is a subject which I would recommend to the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, now distinguished as the advocate of the landed interest.

Then with regard to stamps, I think that they might be reduced, at any rate for a number of years, to a nominal amount. In fact, I would make any sacrifice for the purpose of changing lands from the hands of insolvent and embarrassed owners into those of solvent persons, who would employ it in a manner usefully and advantageously to the country and themselves. There is another proposition with regard to the waste lands of Ireland. The Government made a proposal last year for obtaining those waste lands, and bringing them into cultivation. That I thought injudicious. But they might take those lands at a valuation, and, dividing them into farms and estates of moderate size, might tempt purchasers from different parts of the United Kingdom. By such means I believe that a large proportion of the best of the waste lands might be brought into cultivation. I believe that these are the only means by which capital can be attracted to that country.

The noble Lord at the head of the Government proposes to attract capital to Ireland by a maximum rate and a charge upon the Unions. If that maximum rate be all you have to propose, there will be no more probability of capital flowing into those parts of Ireland where it is so much required, than there was at the time when the poor-rate was unknown. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth spoke about emigration; and I think that he was rather unjust, or at least unwise, in his observations with regard to voluntary emigration. Things that are done voluntarily are not always done well; neither are things that are done by the Government; and I know many cases where Government undertakings have failed as eminently as any that have been attempted by private enterprise. But it does not appear to me that there is much wisdom in the project of emigration, although I know that some hon. Gentlemen from Ireland place great faith in it as a remedy. I

have endeavoured to ascertain what is the relation of the population to the land in Ireland, and this is what I find. In speaking of the Clifden Union, the Inspectors state—

'In conclusion, we beg to offer our matured opinion that the resources of the Union would, if made available, be amply sufficient for the independent support of its population.'

Mr. Hamilton, who was examined before the Committee of which I am a member, said, speaking of the Unions of Donegal and Glenties—

'There is no over-population, if those Unions, according to their capabilities, were cultivated as the average of English counties, with the same skill and capital.'

And Mr. Twisleton said—

'I did not speak of a redundant population in reference to land, only to capital. The land of Ireland could maintain double its present population.'

Then, if that be the case, I am not quite certain that we should be wise in raising sums of money to enable the people to emigrate. The cost of transporting a family to Australia, or even to Canada, is considerable; and the question is, whether, with the means which it would require to convey them to a distant shore, they might not be more profitably employed at home.

I probably shall be told that I propose schemes which are a great interference with the rights of property. My opinion is that nothing can be a greater interference and infringement of the rights of property than the laws which regulate property now. I think that the landowners are under an impression that they have been maintaining great influence, political power, an hereditary aristocracy, and all those other arrangements which some think should never be named without reverence and awe; that they have been accustomed to look at these things, and to fancy that they are worth the price they pay for them. I am of opinion that the disadvantages under which those rights labour throughout the United Kingdom are extreme; but in Ireland the disadvantages are followed by results not known in this country.

You speak of interference with property; but I ask what becomes of the property of the poor man, which consists of his labour? Take those 4,000,000 persons who live in the distressed districts, as described by the right hon. Baronet the member for Tamworth. Their property in labour is almost totally destroyed. There they are—men whom God made and permitted to come into this world, endowed with faculties like ourselves, but who are unable to maintain themselves, and must either starve or live upon others. The interference with their property has been enormous—so great as absolutely to destroy it. Now, I ask the landlords of Ireland, whether living in the state in which they have lived for years is not infinitely worse than that which I have proposed for them? Threatening letters by the post at breakfast-time—now and then the aim of the assassin—poor-rates which are a grievous interference with the rights of property, and this rate in aid, which the gentlemen of Ulster declare to be directly opposed to all the rights of property—what can be worse?

I shall be told that I am injuring aristocratical and territorial influence. What is that in Ireland worth to you now? What is Ireland worth to you at all? Is she not the very symbol and token of your disgrace and humiliation to the whole world? Is she not an incessant trouble to your Legislature, and the source of increased expense to your people, already over-taxed? Is not your legislation all at fault in what it has hitherto done for that country? The people of Ulster say that we shall weaken the Union. It has been one of the misfortunes of the legislation of this House that there has been no honest attempt to make a union with the whole people of Ireland up to this time. We have had a union with

Ulster, but there has been no union *with the whole people of Ireland, and* there never can be a union between the Government and the people whilst such a state of things exists as has for many years past prevailed in the south and west of Ireland.

The condition of Ireland at this moment is this—the rich are menaced with ruin, and ruin from which, in their present course, they cannot escape; whilst the poor are menaced with starvation and death. There are hon. Gentlemen in this House, and there are other landed proprietors in Ireland, who are as admirable in the performance of all their social duties as any men to be found in any part of the world. We have had brilliant examples mentioned in this House; but those men themselves are suffering their characters to be damaged by the present condition of Ireland, and are undergoing a process which must end in their own ruin; because this demoralisation and pauperisation will go on in an extending circle, and will engulf the whole property of Ireland in one common ruin, unless something more be done than passing poor-laws and proposing rates in aid.

Sir, if ever there were an opportunity for a statesman, it is this. This is the hour undoubtedly, and we want the man. The noble Lord at the head of the Government has done many things for his country, for which I thank him as heartily as any man—he has shown on some occasions as much moral courage as it is necessary, in the state of public opinion, upon any question, for a statesman to show; but I have been much disappointed that, upon this Irish question, he has seemed to shrink from a full consideration of the difficulty, and from a resolution to meet it fairly. The character of the present, the character of any Government under such circumstances, must be at stake. The noble Lord cannot, in his position, remain inactive. Let him be as innocent as he may, he can never justify himself to the country, or to the world, or to posterity, if he remains at the head *of this Imperial Legislature and is still* unable, or unwilling, to bring forward measures for the restoration of Ireland. I would address the same language also to the noble Lord at the head of the Irish Government, who has won, I must say, the admiration of the population of this country for the temper and manner in which he has administered the government of Ireland. But he must bear in mind that it is not the highest effort of statesmanship to preserve the peace in a country where there are very few men anxious to go to war, and to preserve the peace, too, with 50,000 armed men at his command, and the whole power of this empire to back him. All that may be necessary, and peace at all hazards must be secured; but if that distinguished Nobleman intends to be known hereafter as a statesman *with regard to his rule in Ireland,* he must be prepared to suggest measures to the Government of a more practical and directly operative character than any he has yet initiated.

Sir, I am ashamed, I must say, of the course which we have taken upon this question. Look at that great subscription that was raised three years ago for Ireland. There was scarcely a part of the globe from which subscriptions did not come. The Pope, as was very natural, subscribed—the head of the great Mahometan empire, the Grand Seignior, sent his thousand pounds—the uttermost parts of the earth sent in their donations. A tribe of Red Indians on the American continent sent their subscription; and I have it on good authority that even the slaves on a plantation in one of the Carolinas subscribed their sorrowful mite that the miseries of Ireland might be relieved. The whole world looked upon the condition of Ireland, and helped to mitigate her miseries. What can we say to all those contributors, who, now that they have paid, must be anxious to know if anything is done to prevent a recurrence of these calamities? We must tell them with blushes that

nothing has been done, but that we are still going on with the poor-rates, and that, having exhausted the patience of the people of England in Parliamentary grants, we are coming now with rates in aid, restricted altogether to the property of Ireland. That is what we have to tell them; whilst we have to acknowledge that our Constitution, boasted of as it has been for generations past, utterly fails to grapple with this great question.

Hon. Gentlemen turn with triumph to neighbouring countries, and speak in glowing terms of our glorious Constitution. It is true, that abroad thrones and dynasties have been overturned, whilst in England peace has reigned undisturbed. But take all the lives that have been lost in the last twelve months in Europe amidst the convulsions that had occurred—take all the cessation of trade, the destruction of industry, all the crushing of hopes and hearts, and they will not compare for an instant with the agonies which have been endured by the population of Ireland under your glorious Constitution. And there are those who now say that this is the ordering of Providence. I met an Irish gentleman the other night, and, speaking upon the subject, he said that he saw no remedy, but that it seemed as if the present state of things were the mode by which Providence intended to solve the question of Irish difficulties. But let us not lay these calamities at the door of Providence; it were sinful in us, of all men, to do so. God has blessed Ireland—and does still bless her—in position, in soil, in climate; He has not withdrawn His promises, nor are they unfulfilled; there is still the sunshine and the shower; still the seed-time and the harvest; and the affluent bosom of the earth yet offers sustenance for man. But man must do his part—we must do our part—we must retrace our steps—we must shun the blunders, and, I would even say, the crimes of our past legislation. We must free the land, and then we shall discover, and not till then, that industry, hopeful and remunerated—industry, free and inviolate, is the only sure foundation on which can be reared the enduring edifice of union and of peace.

every English Member who has paid any attention to the matter, whether the statement is not true that this Parliament has done nothing for the people of Ireland. And, more than that, their complaints have been met—complaints of their sufferings have been met—often by denial, often by insult, often by contempt. And within the last few years we have heard from this very Treasury bench observations with regard to Ireland which no friend of Ireland or of England, and no Minister of the Crown, ought to have uttered with regard to that country. Twice in my Parliamentary life this thing has been done—at least by the close of this day will have been done—and measures of repression—measures for the suspension of the civil rights of the Irish people—have been brought into Parliament and passed with extreme and unusual rapidity.

I have not risen to blame the Secretary of State or to blame his Colleagues for the act of to-day. There may be circumstances to justify a proposition of this kind, and I am not here to deny that these circumstances now exist; but what I complain of is this: there is no statesmanship merely in acts of force and acts of repression. And more than that, I have not observed since I have been in Parliament anything on this Irish question that approaches to the dignity of statesmanship. There has been, I admit, an improved administration in Ireland. There have been Lord-Lieutenants anxious to be just, and there is one there now who is probably as anxious to do justice as any man. We have observed generally in the recent Trials a better tone and temper than were ever witnessed under similar circumstances in Ireland before. But if I go back to the Ministers who have sat on the Treasury bench since I first came into this House—Sir Robert Peel first, then Lord John Russell, then Lord Aberdeen, then Lord Derby, then Lord Palmerston, then Lord Derby again, then Lord Palmerston again, and now Earl Russell—I say that with regard to all these men, there has not been any approach to anything that history will describe as statesmanship on the part of the English Government towards Ireland. There were Coercion Bills in abundance—Arms Bills Session after Session—lamentations like that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was not made perpetual by a clause which he laments was repealed.

There have been Acts for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, like that which we are now discussing; but there has been no statesmanship. Men, the most clumsy and brutal, can do these things; but we want men of higher temper—men of higher genius—men of higher patriotism to deal with the affairs of Ireland. I should like to know whether those statesmen who hold great offices have themselves comprehended the nature of this question. If they have not, they have been manifestly ignorant; and if they have comprehended it and have not dealt with it, they have concealed that which they knew from the people, and evaded the duty they owed to their Sovereign. I do not want to speak disrespectfully of men in office. It is not my custom in this House. I know something of the worrying labours to which they are subjected, and I know not how from day to day they bear the burden of the labour imposed upon them; but still I lament that those who wear the garb—enjoy the emoluments—and I had almost said usurp the dignity of statesmanship, sink themselves merely into respectable and honourable administrators, when there is a whole nation under the sovereignty of the Queen calling for all their anxious thoughts—calling for the highest exercise of the highest qualities of the statesman.

I put the question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is the only man of this Government whom I have heard of late years who has spoken as if he comprehended this question, and he made a speech in the last Session of Parliament which was not without its influence both in England and in Ire-

land. I should like to ask him whether this Irish question is above the stature of himself and of his Colleagues? If it be, I ask them to come down from the high places which they occupy, and try to learn the art of legislation and government before they practise it. I myself believe, if we could divest ourselves of the feelings engendered by party strife, we might come to some better result. Take the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Is there in any legislative assembly in the world a man, as the world judges, of more transcendent capacity? I will say even, is there a man with a more honest wish to do good to the country in which he occupies so conspicuous a place?

Take the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the leader of the Opposition —is there in any legislative assembly in the world, at this moment, a man leading an Opposition of more genius for his position, who has given proof in every way but one in which proof can be given that he is competent to the highest duties of the highest offices of the State? Well, but these men—great men whom we on this side and you on that side, to a large extent, admire and follow—fight for office, and the result is they sit alternately, one on this side and one on that. But suppose it were possible for these men, with their intellects, with their far-reaching vision, to examine this question thoroughly, and to say for once, whether this leads to office and to the miserable notoriety that men call fame which springs from office, or not, 'If it be possible, we will act with loyalty to the Sovereign and justice to the people; and if it be possible, we will make Ireland a strength and not a weakness to the British Empire.' It is from this fighting with party, and for party, and for the gains which party gives, that there is so little result from the great intellect of such men as there. Like the captive Samson of old,—

'They grind in brazen fetters, under task,
With their Heaven-gifted strength—'

and the country and the world gain little by those faculties which God has given them for the blessing of the country and the world.

The Secretary of State and the right hon. Gentleman opposite have referred, even in stronger language, to the unhappy fact that much of what now exists in Ireland has been brought there from the United States of America. That is not a fact for us to console ourselves with; it only adds to the gravity and the difficulty of this question. You may depend upon it that if the Irish in America, having left this country, settled there with so strong a hostility to us, they have had their reasons—and if being there with that feeling of affection for their native country which in all other cases in which we are not concerned we admire and reverence, they interfere in Ireland and stir up there the sedition that now exists, depend upon it there is in the condition of Ireland a state of things which greatly favours their attempts. There can be no continued fire without fuel, and all the Irish in America, and all the citizens of America, united together, with all their organization and all their vast resources, would not raise the very slightest flame of sedition or of insurrectionary movement in England or in Scotland. I want to know why they can do it in Ireland? Are you to say, as some people say in America and in Jamaica when speaking of the black man, that 'Nothing can be made of the Irishman'?

Everything can be made of him in every country but his own. When he has passed through the American school —I speak of him as a child, or in the second generation of the Irish emigrant in that country—he is as industrious, as frugal, as independent, as loyal, as good a citizen of the American Republic, as any man born within the dominions of that Power. Why is it not so in Ireland? I have asked the question before, and I will ask it again—it is a pertinent question, and it demands an answer. Why is it that no Scotchman

who leaves Scotland—and the Scotch have been taunted and ridiculed for being so ready to leave their country for a better climate and a better soil—how comes it, I ask, that no Scotchman who emigrates to the United States, and no Englishman who plants himself there, cherishes the smallest hostility to the people, to the institutions, or to the Government of his native country? Why does every Irishman who leaves his country and goes to the United States immediately settle himself down there, resolved to better his condition in life, but with a feeling of ineradicable hatred to the laws and institutions of the land of his birth? Is not this a fit question for statesmanship?

If the Secretary of State, since his last measure was brought in, now eighteen years ago, had had time, in the multiplicity of his duties, to consider this question; instead of now moving for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, he might possibly have been rejoicing at the universal loyalty which prevailed, not throughout Great Britain only, but throughout the whole population of Ireland. I spent two autumns in Ireland in the years 1849 and 1852, and I recollect making a speech in this House not long afterwards, which some persons thought was not very wide of the mark. I recommended the Ministers of that time to take an opportunity to hold an Irish Session of the Imperial Parliament—to have no great questions discussed connected with the ordinary matters which are brought before us, but to keep Parliament to the consideration of this Irish question solely, and to deal with those great matters which are constant sources of complaint; and I said that a Session that was so devoted to such a blessed and holy work, would be a Session, if it were successful, that would stand forth in all our future history as one of the noblest which had ever passed in the annals of the Imperial Parliament.

Now, Sir, a few days ago everybody in this House, with two or three exceptions, was taking an oath at that table. It is called the Oath of Allegiance. It is meant at once to express loyalty and to keep men loyal. I do not think it generally does bind men to loyalty, if they have not loyalty without it. I hold loyalty to consist, in a country like this, as much in doing justice to the people as in guarding the Crown; for I believe there is no guardianship of the Crown in a country like this, where the Crown is not supposed to rest absolutely upon force, so safe as that of which we know more in our day probably than has been known in former periods of our history, when the occupant of the Throne is respected, admired, and loved by the general people. Now, how comes it that these great statesmen whom I have named, with all their Colleagues, some of them as eminent almost as their leaders, have never tried what they could do—have never shown their loyalty to the Crown by endeavouring to make the Queen as safe in the hearts of the people of Ireland as she is in the hearts of the people of England and of Scotland?

Bear in mind that the Queen of England can do almost nothing in these matters. By our Constitution the Crown can take no direct part in them. The Crown cannot direct the policy of the Government; nay, the Crown cannot, without the consent of this House, even select its Ministers; therefore the Crown is helpless in this matter. And we have in this country a Queen, who, in all the civilized nations of the world, is looked upon as a model of a Sovereign, and yet her name and fame are discredited and dishonoured by circumstances such as those which have twice during her reign called us together to agree to a proposition like that which is brought before us to-day.

There is an instructive anecdote to be found in the annals of the Chinese Empire. In a remote province there was an insurrection. The Emperor put down the insurrection, but he abased and humbled himself before the people, and said that if he had been guilty of neglect he acknowledged his guilt, and he hum-

bled himself before those on whom he had brought the evil of an insurrection in one of his provinces. The Queen of these realms is not so responsible. She cannot thus humble herself; but I say that your statesmen for the last forty—for the last sixty—years are thus guilty, and that they ought to humble themselves before the people of this country for their neglect. But I have heard from Members in this House—I have seen much writing in newspapers—and I have heard of speeches elsewhere, in which some of us, who advocate what we believe to be a great and high morality in public affairs, are charged with dislike to the institutions, and even disloyalty to the dynasty which rules in England. There can be nothing more offensive, nothing more unjust, nothing more utterly false. We who ask Parliament, in dealing with Ireland, to deal with it upon the unchangeable principles of justice, are the friends of the people, and the really loyal advisers and supporters of the Throne.

All history teaches us that it is not in human nature that men should be content under any system of legislation, and of institutions such as exist in Ireland. You may pass this Bill, you may put the Home Secretary's five hundred men into gaol—you may do more than this, you may suppress the conspiracy and put down the insurrection, but the moment it is suppressed there will still remain the germs of this malady, and from those germs will grow up as heretofore another crop of insurrection and another harvest of misfortune. And it may be that those who sit here eighteen years after this moment will find another Ministry and another Secretary of State ready to propose to you another administration of the same ever-failing and ever-poisonous medicine. I say there is a mode of making Ireland loyal. I say that the Parliament of England having abolished the Parliament of Ireland is doubly bound to examine what that mode is, and, if it can discover it, to adopt it. I say that the Minister who occupies office in this country, merely that he may carry on the daily routine of administration, who dares not grapple with this question, who dares not go into Opposition, and who will sit anywhere except where he can tell his mind freely to the House and to the country, may have a high position in the country, but he is not a statesman, nor is he worthy of the name.

Sir, I shall not oppose the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman. The circumstances, I presume, are such that the course which is about to be pursued is perhaps the only merciful course for Ireland. But I suppose it is not the intention of the Government, in the case of persons who are arrested, and against whom any just complaint can be made, to do anything more than that which the ordinary law permits, and that when men are brought to trial they will be brought to trial with all the fairness and all the advantages which the ordinary law gives. I should say what was most unjust to the Gentlemen sitting on that (the Treasury) bench, if I said aught else than that I believe they are as honestly disposed to do right in this matter as I am and as I have ever been. I implore them, if they can, to shake off the trammels of doubt and fear with regard to this question, and to say something that may be soothing—something that may give hope to Ireland.

I voted the other night with the hon. Member for Tralee (The O'Donoghue). We were in a very small minority. ['Hear, hear.'] Yes, I have often been in small minorities. The hon. Gentleman would have been content with a word of kindness and of sympathy, not for conspiracy, but for the people of Ireland. That word was not inserted in the Queen's speech, and to-night the Home Secretary has made a speech urging the House to the course which, I presume, is about to be pursued; but he did not in that speech utter a single sentence with regard to a question which lies behind, and is greater and deeper than that which is discussed.

I hope, Sir, that if Ministers feel themselves bound to take this course of suspending the common rights of personal freedom to a whole nation, at least they will not allow this debate to close without giving to us and to that nation some hope that before long measures will be considered and will be introduced which will tend to create the same loyalty in Ireland that exists in Great Britain. If every man outside the walls of this House who has the interest of the whole Empire at heart were to speak here, what would he say to this House? Let not one day elapse, let not another Session pass, until you have done something to wipe off this blot—for blot it is upon the reign of the Queen, and scandal it is to the civilization and to the justice of the people of this country.

IRELAND.

VI.

DUBLIN, OCTOBER 30, 1866.

[Mr. Bright was invited to a Public Banquet in Dublin. The invitation was signed by more than twenty Members of Parliament, and by a large number of influential Members of the Liberal Party in Ireland. This speech was spoken at the Banquet. The O'Donoghue was in the Chair.]

I FEEL myself more embarrassed than I can well describe at the difficult but honourable position in which I find myself to-night. I am profoundly moved by the exceeding and generous kindness with which you have received me, and all I can do is to thank you for it, and to say how grateful to my heart it is that such a number as I see before me—I will say of my countrymen—have approved generally of the political course which I have pursued. But I may assure you that the difficulty of this position is not at all of my seeking. I heard during the last Session of Parliament that if I was likely to come to Ireland during the autumn, it was not improbable that I should be asked to some banquet of this kind in this city. I had an intention of coming, but being moved by this kindness or menace, I changed my mind, and spent some weeks in Scotland instead of Ireland. When I found from the newspapers that an invitation was being signed, asking me to come here, I wrote to my honourable friend, Sir John Gray, to ask him if he would be kind enough to put an extinguisher upon the project, inasmuch as I was not intending to cross the Channel. He said that the matter had proceeded so far that it was impossible to interfere with it—that it must take its natural course; and the result was that I received an invitation signed, I think, by about one hundred and forty names, amongst whom there were not less, I believe, than twenty-two Members of the House of Commons. Well, as you will probably imagine, I felt that this invitation was of such a nature that, although it was most difficult to accede to it, it was impossible to refuse it. This accounts for my being here to-night, and is a simple explanation of what has taken place.

I said amongst the signatures were the names of not less than twenty-two Members of the House of Commons. I speak with grief when I say that one of our friends who signed that invitation is no longer with us. I had not the pleasure of a long acquaintance with Mr. Dillon, but I shall take this opportunity of saying that during the last Session of Parliament I formed a very high opinion of his character. There was that in his eye and in the

tone of his voice—in his manner altogether, which marked him for an honourable and a just man. I venture to say that his sad and sudden removal is a great loss to Ireland. I believe amongst all her worthy sons, Ireland has had no worthier and no nobler son than John Blake Dillon.

I shall not be wrong if I assume that the ground of my visit to Dublin is to be found first in the sympathy which I have always felt and expressed for the condition, and for the wrongs, and for the rights of the people of Ireland, and probably also because I am supposed, in some degree, to represent some amount of the opinion in England, which is also favourable to the true interests of this island.

The Irish question is a question that has often been discussed, and yet it remains at this day as much a question as it has been for centuries past. The Parliament of Kilkenny,—a Parliament that sat a very long time ago, if indeed it was a Parliament at all,—it was a Parliament that sat about five hundred years ago, which proposed, I believe, to inflict a very heavy penalty if any Irishman's horse was found grazing on any Englishman's land,—this Parliament left on record a question, which it may be worth our while to consider to-night. It put this question to the King, 'How comes it to pass that the King was never the richer for Ireland?' We, five hundred years afterwards, venture to ask this question, 'Why is it that the Queen, or the Crown, or the United Kingdom, or the Empire, is never the richer for Ireland?'—and if you will permit me I will try to give you as clearly as I can something like an answer to that very old question. What it may be followed by is this, How is it that we, the Imperial Parliament, cannot act so as to bring about in Ireland contentment and tranquillity, and a solid union between Ireland and Great Britain? And that means, further, How can we improve the condition and change the minds of the people of Ireland? Some say (I have heard many who say it in England, and I am afraid there are Irishmen also who would say it), that there is some radical defect in the Irish character which prevents the condition of Ireland being so satisfactory as is the condition of England and of Scotland. Now, I am inclined to believe that whatever there is that is defective in any portion of the Irish people comes not from their race, but from their history, and from the conditions to which they have been subjected.

I am told by those in authority that in Ireland there is a remarkable absence of crime. I have heard since I came to Dublin, from those well acquainted with the facts, that there is probably no great city in the world—in the civilized and Christian world—of equal population with the city in which we are now assembled, where there is so little crime committed. And I find that the portion of the Irish people which has found a home in the United States has in the period of sixteen years—between 1848 and 1864—remitted about 13,000,000*l.* sterling to their friends and relatives in Ireland. I am bound to place these facts in opposition to any statements that I hear as to any radical defects of the Irish character. I say that it would be much more probable that the defect lies in the Government and in the law. But there are some others who say that the great misfortune of Ireland is in the existence of the noxious race of political agitators. Well, as to that I may state, that the most distinguished political agitators that have appeared during the last hundred years in Ireland are Grattan and O'Connell, and I should say that he must be either a very stupid or a very base Irishman who would wish to erase the achievements of Grattan and O'Connell from the annals of his country.

But some say (and this is not an uncommon thing)—som[illegible] that the priests of th[illegible]
have b[illegible]
I beli[illegible]
Irel[illegible]

prosperous and numerous community than the priests of the Catholic Church; and further, I believe that no men have suffered more - have suffered more, I mean, in mind and in feeling—from witnessing the miseries and the desolation which during the last century (to go no farther back) have stricken and afflicted the Irish people.

But some others say that there is no ground of complaint, because the laws and institutions of Ireland are, in the main, the same as the laws and institutions of England and Scotland. They say, for example, that if there be an Established Church in Ireland there is one in England and one in Scotland, and that Nonconformists are very numerous both in England and in Scotland; but they seem to forget this fact, that the Church in England or the Church in Scotland is not in any sense a foreign Church—that it has not been imposed in past times, and is not maintained by force—that it is not in any degree the symbol of conquest—that it is not the Church of a small minority, absorbing the ecclesiastical revenues and endowments of a whole kingdom; and they omit to remember or to acknowledge that if any Government attempted to plant by force the Episcopal Church in Scotland or the Catholic Church in England, the disorders and discontent which have prevailed in Ireland would be witnessed with tenfold intensity and violence in Great Britain. And these persons whom I am describing also say that the land laws in Ireland are the same as the land laws in England. It would be easy to show that the land laws in England are bad enough, and that but for the outlet of the population, afforded by our extraordinary manufacturing industry, the condition of England would in all probability become quite as bad as the condition of Ireland has been; but if the countries differ with regard to land and the
asking me to come here, I [illegible], may
honourable friend, Sir John Gr.ould
ask him if he would be kind enou,
put an extinguisher upon the proje-

ture of conquest, not of conquest of eight hundred years ago, but of conquest completed only two hundred years ago; and it may be well for us to remember, and for all Englishmen to remember, that succeeding that transfer of the land to the new-comers from Great Britain, there followed a system of law, known by the name of the Penal Code, of the most ingenious cruelty, and such as, I believe, has never in modern times been inflicted on any Christian people. Unhappily, on this account, the wound which was opened by the conquest has never been permitted to be closed, and thus we have had landowners in Ireland of a different race, of a different religion, and of different ideas from the great bulk of the people, and there has been a constant and bitter war between the owners and occupiers of the soil. Now, up to this point I suppose that even the gentlemen who were dining together the other evening in Belfast would probably agree with me, because what I have stated is mere matter of notorious history, and to be found in every book which has treated of the course of Irish affairs during the last two hundred years. But I think they would agree with me even further than this. They would say that Ireland is a land which has been torn by religious factions, and torn by these factions at least in the North as much as in the South; and I think they would be doing less than justice to the inhabitants of the North if they said that they had in any degree come short of the people of the South in the intensity of their passionate feelings with regard to their Church.

But Ireland has been more than this—it has been a land of evictions—a word which, I suspect, is scarcely known in any other civilized country. It is a country from which thousands of families have been driven by the will of the landowners and the power of the law. It is a country where have existed, to a great extent, those dread tribunals known by the name of common secret societies, by which, in pursuit of what some men have thought to be justice,

there have been committed crimes of appalling guilt in the eye of the whole world. It is a country, too, in which—and it is the only Christian country of which it may be said for some centuries past—it is a country in which a famine of the most desolating character has prevailed even during our own time. I think I was told in 1849, as I stood in the burial-ground at Skibbereen, that at least 400 people who had died of famine were buried within the quarter of an acre of ground on which I was then looking. It is a country, too, from which there has been a greater emigration by sea within a given time than has been known at any time from any other country in the world. It is a country where there has been, for generations past, a general sense of wrong, out of which has grown a state of chronic insurrection; and at this very moment when I speak, the general safeguard of constitutional liberty is withdrawn, and we meet in this hall, and I speak here to-night, rather by the forbearance and permission of the Irish executive than under the protection of the common safeguards of the rights and liberties of the people of the United Kingdom.

I venture to say that this is a miserable and a humiliating picture to draw of this country. Bear in mind that I am not speaking of Poland suffering under the conquest of Russia. There is a gentleman, now a candidate for an Irish county, who is very great upon the wrongs of Poland; but I have found him always in the House of Commons taking sides with that great party which has systematically supported the wrongs of Ireland. I am not speaking about Hungary, or of Venice as she was under the rule of Austria, or of the Greeks under the dominion of the Turk, but I am speaking of Ireland—part of the United Kingdom—part of that which boasts itself to be the most civilized and the most Christian nation in the world. I took the liberty recently, at a meeting in Glasgow, to say that I believed it was impossible for a class to govern a great nation wisely and justly. Now, in Ireland there has been a field in which all the principles of the Tory party have had their complete experiment and development. You have had the country gentleman in all his power. You have had any number of Acts of Parliament which the ancient Parliament of Ireland or the Parliament of the United Kingdom could give him. You have had the Established Church supported by the law, even to the extent, not many years ago, of collecting its revenues by the aid of military force. In point of fact, I believe it would be impossible to imagine a state of things in which the principles of the Tory party have had a more entire and complete opportunity for their trial than they have had within the limits of this island. And yet what has happened? This, surely. That the kingdom has been continually weakened—that the harmony of the empire has been disturbed, and that the mischief has not been confined to the United Kingdom, but has spread to the Colonies. And at this moment, as we know by every arrival from the United States, the colony of Canada is exposed to danger of invasion—that it is forced to keep on foot soldiers which it otherwise would not want, and to involve itself in expenses which threaten to be ruinous to its financial condition, and all that it may defend itself from Irishmen hostile to England who are settled in the United States.

In fact, the Government of Lord Derby at this moment is doing exactly that which the Government of Lord North did nearly a hundred years ago—it is sending out troops across the Atlantic to fight Irishmen who are the bitter enemies of England on the American continent. Now, I believe every gentleman in this room will admit that all that I have said is literally true. And if it be true, what conclusion are we to come to? Is it that the law which rules in Ireland is bad, but the people good; or that the law is good, but the people bad? Now, let

us, if we can, get rid for a moment of Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, Protestantism, and Orangeism on the one hand, and of Catholicism, Romanism, and Ultramontanism on the other,—let us for a moment get beyond all these 'isms,' and try if we can discover what it is that is the great evil in your country. I shall ask you only to turn your eye upon two points—the first is the Established Church, and the second is the tenure of land. The Church may be said to affect the soul and sentiment of the country, and the land question may be said to affect the means of life and the comforts of the people.

I shall not blame the bishops and clergy of the Established Church. There may be, and I doubt not there are amongst them, many pious and devoted men, who labour to the utmost of their power to do good in the district which is committed to their care; but I venture to say this, that if they were all good and all pious, it would not in a national point of view compensate for this one fatal error—the error of their existence as the ministers of an Established Protestant Church in Ireland. Every man of them is necessarily in his district a symbol of the supremacy of the few and of the subjection of the many; and although the amount of the revenue of the Established Church as the sum payable by the whole nation may not be considerable, yet bear in mind that it is often the galling of the chain which is more tormenting than the weight of it. I believe that the removal of the Established Church would create a new political and social atmosphere in Ireland—that it would make the people feel that old things had passed away—that all things had become new—that an Irishman and his faith were no longer to be condemned in his own country—and that for the first time the English people and the English Parliament intended to do full justice to Ireland.

Now, leaving the Established Church, I come to the question of the land. I have said that the ownership of the land in Ireland came originally from conquest and from confiscation, and, as a matter of course, there was created a great gulf between the owner and the occupier, and from that time to this doubtless there has been wanting that sympathy which exists to a large extent in Great Britain, and that ought to exist in every country. I am told—you can answer it if I am wrong—that it is not common in Ireland now to give leases to tenants, especially to Catholic tenants. If that be so, then the security for the property of the tenant rests only upon the good feeling and favour of the owner of the land, for the laws, as we know, have been made by the landowners, and many propositions for the advantage of the tenants have unfortunately been too little considered by Parliament. The result is that you have bad farming, bad dwelling-houses, bad temper, and everything bad connected with the occupation and cultivation of land in Ireland. One of the results—a result the most appalling—is this, that your population are fleeing from your country and seeking a refuge in a distant land. On this point I wish to refer to a letter which I received a few days ago from a most esteemed citizen of Dublin. He told me that he believed that a very large portion of what he called the poor, amongst Irishmen, sympathized with any scheme or any proposition that was adverse to the Imperial Government. He said further, that the people here are rather in the country than of it, and that they are looking more to America than they are looking to England. I think there is a good deal in that. When we consider how many Irishmen have found a refuge in America, I do not know how we can wonder at that statement.

You will recollect that when the ancient Hebrew prophet prayed in his captivity he prayed with his window opened towards Jerusalem. You know that the followers of Mahommed, when they pray, turn their faces towards Mecca. When the Irish peasant asks for food, and freedom, and blessing, his

eye follows the setting sun; the aspirations of his heart reach beyond the wide Atlantic, and in spirit he grasps hands with the great Republic of the West. If this be so, I say, then, that the disease is not only serious, but it is even desperate; but desperate as it is, I believe there is a certain remedy for it, if the people and the Parliament of the United Kingdom are willing to apply it. Now, if it were possible, would it not be worth while to change the sentiments and improve the condition of the Irish cultivators of the soil? If we were to remove the State Church, there would still be a Church, but it would not be a supremacy Church. The Catholics of Ireland have no idea of saying that Protestantism in its various forms shall not exist in their island. There would still be a Church, but it would be a free Church of a section of a free people. I will not go into details about the change. Doubtless every man would say that the present occupants of the livings should not, during their lifetime, be disturbed; but if the principle of the abolition of the State Church were once fixed and accepted, it would not be difficult to arrange the details that would be satisfactory to the people of Ireland.

Who objects to this? The men who are in favour of supremacy, and the men who have a fanatical hatred of what they call Popery. To honest and good men of the Protestant Church and of the Protestant faith there is no reason whatever to fear this change. What has the voluntary system done in Scotland? What has it done amongst the Nonconformists of England? What has it done amongst the population of Wales? and what has it done amongst the Catholic population of your own Ireland? In my opinion, the abolition of the Established Church would give Protestantism itself another chance. I believe there has been in Ireland no other enemy of Protestantism so injurious as the Protestant State Establishment. It has been loaded for two hundred years with the sins of bad government and bad laws, and whatever may have been the beauty and the holiness of its doctrine or of its professors, it has not been able to hold its ground, loaded as it has been by the sins of a bad government. One effect of the Established Church has been this, the making Catholicism in Ireland not only a faith but a patriotism, for it was not likely that any member of the Catholic Church would incline in the slightest degree to Protestantism so long as it presented itself to his eyes as a wrong-doer and full of injustice in connection with the government of his country.

But if honest Protestantism has nothing to fear from the changes that I would recommend, what has the honest landowner to fear? The history of Europe and America for the last one hundred years affords scarcely any picture more painful than that which is afforded by the landowners of this kingdom. The Irish landowner has been different from every other landowner, for the bulk of his land has only been about half cultivated, and he has had to collect his rents by a process approaching the evils of civil war. His property has been very insecure—the sale of it sometimes has been rendered impossible. The landowner himself has often been hated by those who ought to have loved him. He has been banished from his ancestral home by terror, and not a few have lost their lives without the sympathy of those who ought to have been their protectors and their friends. I would like to ask, what can be much worse than this? If in this country fifty years ago, as in Prussia, there had arisen statesmen who would have taken one-third or one-half the land from the landowners of Ireland, and made it over to their tenants, I believe that the Irish landowner, great as would have been the injustice of which he might have complained, would in all probability have been richer and happier than he has been.

What is the first remedy which you would propose? Clearly this—that which is the most easily applicable and which would most speedily touch the

condition of the country. It is this—that the property which the tenant shall invest or create in his farm shall be secured to the tenant by law. I believe that if Parliament were fairly to enact this it would make a change in the whole temper of the country. I recollect in the year 1849 being down in the county of Wexford. I called at the house of an old farmer of the name of Stafford, who lived in a very good house, the best farm-house, I think, that I had seen since leaving Dublin. He lived on his own farm, which he had bought fifteen years before. The house was a house which he had himself built. He was a venerable old man, and we had some very interesting conversation with him. I asked how it was he had so good a house? He said the farm was his own, and the house was his own, and, as no man could disturb him, he had made it a much better house than was common for the farmers of Ireland. I said to him, 'If all the farmers of Ireland had the same security for the capital they laid out on their farms, what would be the result?' The old man almost sprang out of his chair, and said, 'Sir, if you will give us that encouragement, we will *bate* the hunger out of Ireland.' It is said that all this must be left to contract between the landlord and the tenant; but the public, which may be neither landlord nor tenant, has a great interest in this question; and I maintain that the interests of the public require that Parliament should secure to the tenant the property which he has invested in his farm. But I would not stop here.

There is another, and what I should call a more permanent and far-reaching remedy for the evils of Ireland, and those persons who stickle so much for political economy I hope will follow me in this. The great evil of Ireland is this—that the Irish people—the Irish nation—are dispossessed of the soil, and what we ought to do is to provide for, and aid in, their restoration to it by all measures of justice. Why should we tolerate in Ireland the law of primogeniture? Why should we tolerate the system of entails? Why should the object of the law be to accumulate land in great masses in few hands, and to make it almost impossible for persons of small means, and tenant-farmers, to become possessors of land? If you go to other countries—for example, to Norway, to Denmark, to Holland, to Belgium, to France, to Germany, to Italy, or to the United States, you will find that in all these countries those laws of which I complain have been abolished, and the land is just as free to buy and sell, and hold and cultivate, as any other description of property in the kingdom. No doubt your Landed Estates Court and your Record of Titles Act were good measures, but they were good because they were in the direction that I want to travel farther in.

But I would go farther than that; I would deal with the question of absenteeism. I am not going to propose to tax absentees; but if my advice were taken, we should have a Parliamentary Commission empowered to buy up the large estates in Ireland belonging to the English nobility, for the purpose of selling them on easy terms to the occupiers of the farms and to the tenantry of Ireland. Now, let me be fairly understood. I am not proposing to tax absentees; I am not proposing to take any of their property from them; but I propose this, that a Parliamentary Commission should be empowered to treat for the purchase of those large estates with a view of selling them to the tenantry of Ireland. Now, here are some of them—the present Prime Minister Lord Derby, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Fitzwilliam, the Marquis of Hertford, the Marquis of Bath, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Devonshire, and many others. They have estates in Ireland; many of them, I dare say, are just as well managed as any other estates in the country; but what you want is to restore to Ireland a middle class proprietary of the soil; and I venture to say that if these estates could be purchased and could be sold out farm by farm to the tenant occupiers

in Ireland, that it would be infinitely better in a conservative sense, than that they should belong to great proprietors living out of the country.

I have said that the disease is desperate, and that the remedy must be searching. I assert that the present system of government with regard to the Church and with regard to the land has failed disastrously in Ireland. Under it Ireland has become an object of commiseration to the whole world, and a discredit to the United Kingdom, of which it forms a part. It is a land of many sorrows. Men fight for supremacy, and call it Protestantism; they fight for evil and bad laws, and they call it acting for the defence of property. Now, are there no good men in Ireland of those who are generally opposed to us in politics—are there none who can rise above the level of party? If there be such, I wish my voice might reach them. I have often asked myself whether patriotism is dead in Ireland. Cannot all the people of Ireland see that the calamities of their country are the creatures of the law, and if that be so, that just laws only can remove these calamities?

If Irishmen were united—if your 105 Members were for the most part agreed, you might do almost anything that you liked—you might do it even in the present Parliament; but if you are disunited, then I know not how you can gain anything from a Parliament created as the Imperial Parliament is now. The classes who rule in Britain will hear your cry as they have heard it before, and will pay no attention to it. They will see your people leaving your shores, and they will think it no calamity to the country. They know that they have force to suppress insurrection, and, therefore, you can gain nothing from their fears. What, then, is your hope? It is in a better Parliament, representing fairly the United Kingdom—the movement which is now in force in England and Scotland, and which is your movement as much as ours. If there were 100 more Members, the representatives of large and free constituencies, then your cry would be heard, and the people would give you that justice which a class has so long denied you. The great party that is now in power—the Tory party—denies that you have any just cause of complaint.

In a speech delivered the other day in Belfast, much was said of the enforcement of the law; but there was nothing said about any change or amendment in the law. With this party terror is their only specific,—they have no confidence in allegiance except where there is no power to rebel. Now, I differ from these men entirely. I believe that at the root of a general discontent there is in all countries a general grievance and general suffering. The surface of society is not incessantly disturbed without a cause. I recollect in the poem of the greatest of Italian poets, he tells us that as he saw in vision the Stygian lake, and stood upon its banks, he observed the constant commotion upon the surface of the pool, and his good instructor and guide explained to him the cause of it—

'This, too, for certain know, that underneath
The water dwells a multitude, whose sighs
Into these bubbles make the surface heave,
As thine eye tells thee wheresoe'er it turn.'

And I say in Ireland for generations back, that the misery and the wrongs of the people have made their sign, and have found a voice in constant insurrection and disorder. I have said that Ireland is a country of many wrongs and of many sorrows. Her past lies almost all in shadow. Her present is full of anxiety and peril. Her future depends on the power of her people to substitute equality and justice for supremacy, and a generous patriotism for the spirit of faction. In the effort now making in Great Britain to create a free representation of the people you have the deepest interest. The people never

wish to suffer, and they never wish to inflict injustice. They have no sympathy with the wrong-doer, whether in Great Britain or in Ireland: and when they are fairly represented in the Imperial Parliament, as I hope they will one day be, they will speedily give an effective and final answer to that old question of the Parliament of Kilkenny—'How comes it to pass that the King has never been the richer for Ireland?'

172,000 electors. Therefore you see that the Members are so distributed that the great populations have not one quarter of the influence in Parliament which those small populations in the small boroughs have. We come next to another question which is of great consequence. Not only are those small boroughs altogether too small for independence, but if we come to your large county constituencies, we find that from the peculiar circumstances and the relations which exist between the voter and the owner of the land, there is scarcely any freedom of election. Even in your counties I should suppose that if there was no compulsion from the landowners or their agents, that in at least three-fourths of this island the vote of the county electors would be by a vast majority in favour of the Liberal candidates. I am not speaking merely of men who profess a sort of liberality which just enables them to go with their party, but I speak of men who would be thoroughly in earnest in sustaining, as far as they were able, in Parliament, the opinions which they were sent to represent by the large constituencies who elected them.

The question of the ballot is, in my opinion, of the greatest importance in Great Britain and Ireland, but is of more importance in the counties than it is in the large boroughs. For example: in Great Britain, in such boroughs as Edinburgh and Glasgow, and Manchester and Birmingham, and the metropolitan boroughs, where the number of electors runs from 10,000 to 25,000, bribery is of no avail, because you could not bribe thousands of men. To bribe 100 or 200 would not alter the return at an election with so large a constituency. But what you want with the ballot is, that in the counties where the tenant-farmers vote, and where they live upon their land without the security of a lease, or without the security of any law to give them compensation for any improvements they may have made upon the land, the tenant-farmer feels himself always liable to injury, and sometimes to ruin, if he gets into a dispute with the agent or the landowner with regard to the manner in which he has exercised his franchise. And what will be very important also, if you have the ballot, your elections will be tranquil, without disorder and without riot. Last week, or the week before, there was an election in one of your great counties. Well, making every allowance that can be made for the exaggerations circulated by the writers of the two parties, it is quite clear to everybody that the circumstances of that election, though not absolutely uncommon in Ireland, were still such as to be utterly discreditable to a real representative system. And you must bear in mind that there is no other people in the world that considers that it has a fair representative system unless it has the ballot. The ballot is universal almost in the United States. It is almost universal in the colonies, at any rate in the Australian colonies; it is almost universal on the continent of Europe, and in the new Parliament of North Germany, which is about soon to be assembled, every man of twenty-five years of age is to be allowed to vote, and to vote by ballot.

Now, I hold, without any fear of contradiction, that the intelligence and the virtues of the people of Ireland are not represented in the Parliament. You have your wrongs to complain of—wrongs centuries old, and wrongs that long ago the people of Ireland, and, I venture to say, the people of Great Britain united with Ireland — My friend up there will not listen to the end of my sentence. I say that the people of Great Britain, acting with the people of Ireland, in a fair representation of the whole, would long ago have remedied every just grievance of which you could complain.

I will take two questions which I treated upon the other evening. I will ask about one question—that is, the question of the supremacy of the Church in Ireland. Half the people in England are Nonconformists. They are not in favour of an Established Church anywhere, and it is utterly impossible that

they could be in favour of an Established Church in an island like this—an Established Church formed of a mere handful of the population, in opposition to the wishes of the nation. Now take the Principality of Wales. I suppose that four out of five of the population there are Dissenters, and they are not in favour of maintaining a religious Protestant Establishment in Ireland. The people of Scotland have also seceded in such large numbers from their Established Church, although of a democratic character, that I suppose those who have seceded are a considerable majority of the whole people—they are not in favour of maintaining an ecclesiastical Establishment in Ireland in opposition to the views of the great majority of your people. Take the other question that of land. There is nobody in Great Britain of the great town population, or of the middle class, or of the still more numerous working class, who has any sympathy with that condition of the law and of the administration of the law which has worked such mischiefs in your country. But these Nonconformists, whether in England, Wales, or Scotland, these great middle classes, and still greater working classes, are in the position that you are. Only sixteen of every hundred have a vote, and those sixteen are so arranged that when their representatives get to Parliament they turn out for the most part to be no real representatives of the people.

I will tell you fairly that you, as the less populous and less powerful part of this great nation—you of all the men in the United Kingdom, have by far the strongest interest in a thorough reform of the Imperial Parliament, and I believe that you yourselves could not do yourselves such complete justice by yourselves as you can do, by fairly acting with the generous millions of my countrymen in whose name I stand here. You have on this platform two members of the Reform League from London. I received yesterday, or the day before, a telegram from the Scottish Reform League, from Glasgow. I am not sure whether there is a copy of it in any of the newspapers, but it was sent to me, and I presume it was sent to me that I might read it, if I had the opportunity of meeting any of the unenfranchised men of this city. It says:—'The Scottish Reform League request you to convey to the Reformers in Ireland their deep sympathy. They sincerely hope that soon in Ireland, as in Scotland and England, Reform Leagues may be formed in every town to secure to the people their political rights. Urge upon our friends in Ireland their duty to promote this great movement, and to secure at home those benefits which thousands of their fellow-countrymen are forced to seek in other lands—where land and State Church grievances are unknown. We also seek co-operation, knowing that our freedom, though secure to-morrow, would not be safe so long as one portion of the United Kingdom were less free than the other portions.' There is the outspoken voice of the representatives of that great multitude that only a fortnight since I saw passing through the streets of Glasgow. For three hours the procession passed, with all the emblems and symbols of their various trades, and the streets for two or three miles were enlivened by banners, and the air was filled with the sounds of music from their bands. Those men but spoke the same language that was heard in the West Riding, in Manchester, in Birmingham, and in London; and you men of Dublin, and of Ireland, you never made a mistake more grievous in your lives than when you come to the conclusion that there are not millions of men in Great Britain willing to do you full justice.

I am very sorry that my voice is not what it was, and when I think of the work that is to be done sometimes I feel it is a pity we grow old so fast. But years ago, when I have thought of the condition of Ireland, of its sorrows and wrongs, of the discredit that its condition has brought upon the English, the Irish, and the British name, I have

thought, if I could be in all other things the same, but by birth an Irishman, there is not a town in this island I would not visit for the purpose of discussing the great Irish question, and of rousing my countrymen to some great and united action.

I do not believe in the necessity of wide-spread and perpetual misery. I do not believe that we are placed on this island, and on this earth, that one man may be great and wealthy, and revel in every profuse indulgence, and five, six, nine, or ten men shall suffer the abject misery which we see so commonly in the world. With your soil, your climate, and your active and spirited race, I know not what you might not do. There have been reasons to my mind why soil and climate, and the labour of your population, have not produced general comfort and competence for all.

The Address speaks of the friendly feeling and the sympathy which I have had for Ireland during my political career. When I first went into the House of Commons the most prominent figure in it was Daniel O'Connell. I have sat by his side for hours in that House, and listened to observations both amusing and instructive on what was passing under discussion. I have seen him, too, more than once upon the platforms of the Anti-Corn-law League. I recollect that on one occasion he sent to Ireland expressly for a newspaper for me, which contained a report of a speech which he made against the Corn-law when the Corn-law was passing through Parliament in 1815, and we owe much to his exertions in connection with that question, for almost the whole Liberal—I suppose the whole Liberal—party of the Irish representatives in Parliament supported the measure of free trade of which we were the prominent advocates; and I know of nothing that was favourable to freedom, whether in connection with Ireland or England, that O'Connell did not support with all his great powers. Why is it, now, that there should be any kind of schism between the Libera people of Ireland and the Liberal peopl of Great Britain? I do not ask you t join hands with supremacy and oppres sion, whether in your island or ours What I ask you is, to open your hear of hearts, and join hands for a real an thorough working union for freedon with the people of Great Britain.

Before I sit down, I must be allowe to advert to a point which has been muc commented upon—a sentence in m speech made the other night wit regard to the land. There are news papers in Dublin which I need no name, because I am quite sure you ca find them out—which do not feel an strong desire to judge fairly anything I may propose for the pacification an redemption of the people of Ireland It was this I said: 'It is of the firs importance that the people of Ireland by some process or other, should hav the opportunity of being made the pos sessors of their own soil.' You wil know perfectly well that I am no about to propose a copy of the villain ous crimes of two hundred years ago, t confiscate the lands of the proprietors here or elsewhere. I propose to intro duce a system which would gradually no doubt rapidly and easily, without injuring anybody, make many thousand who are now tenant-farmers, without lease and security, the owners of thei farms in this island. This is my plan and I want to restate it with a littl further explanation, in order that these gentlemen to whom I have referred may not repeat the very untrue, and I may say dishonourable comments which they have made upon me.

There are many large estates in Ireland which belong to rich families in England,—families not only of the highest rank, but of the highest character,—because I will venture to say there are not to be found amongst the English nobility families of more perfect honourableness and worth than some of those to whom my plan would be offered: and, therefore, I am not speaking against the aristocracy, against those

families, or against property, or against anybody, or against anything that is good. I say, that if Parliament were to appoint a Commission, and give it, say, at first up to the amount of five millions sterling, the power to negotiate or treat with those great families in England who have estates in Ireland, it is probable that some of those great estates might be bought at a not very unreasonable price. I am of opinion that this would be the cheapest money that the Imperial Parliament ever expended, even though it became possessed of those estates at a price considerably above the market price. But I propose it should be worked in this way. I will take a case. I will assume that this Commission is in possession of a considerable estate bought from some present owner of it. I will take one farm, which I will assume to be worth 1,000*l*., for which the present tenant is paying a rent of 50*l*. a-year. He has no lease. He has no security. He makes almost no improvement of any kind; and he is not quite sure whether, when he has saved a little more money, he will not take his family off to the United States. Now we will assume ourselves, if you like, to be that Commission, and that we have before us the farmer who is the tenant on that particular farm, for which he pays 50*l*. a-year, without lease or security, and which I assume to be worth 1,000*l*. The Government, I believe, lends money to Irish landowners for drainage purposes at about 3½ per cent. per annum. Suppose the Government were to say to this farmer, 'You would not have any objection to become possessed of this farm?' 'No, not the slightest,' he might answer, 'but how is that to be done?' In this way;—You may pay 50*l*. a-year, that is, 5 per cent. on one thousand pounds; the Government can afford to do these transactions for 3½ per cent.; if you will pay 60*l*. a-year for a given number of years, which any of the actuaries of the insurance offices or any good arithmetician may soon calculate,—if you will pay 60*l*. for your rent, instead of 50*l*., it may be for perhaps twenty years, —at the end of that time the farm will be yours, without any further payment.

I want you to understand how this is. If the farmer paid ten pounds a-year more than he now pays, towards buying his farm, and if the 1,000*l*. the Government would pay for the farm would not cost the Government more than 35*l*., the difference between 35*l*. and 60*l*. being 25*l*., would be the sum which that farmer, in his rent, would be paying to the Commission, that is, to the Government, for the redemption of his farm. Thus, at the end of a very few years, the farmer would possess his own farm, having a perfect security in the meantime. Nobody could turn him out if he paid his rent, and nobody could rob him for any improvement he made on his land. The next morning after he made that agreement, he would explain it to his wife and to his big boy, who had perhaps been idling about for a long time, and there would not be a stone on the land that would not be removed, not a weed that he would not pull up, not a particle of manure that he would not save; everything would be done with a zeal and an enthusiasm which he had never known before; and by the time the few years had run on when the farm should become his without any further purchase, he would have turned a dilapidated, miserable little farm into a garden for himself and family. Now, this statement may be commented on by some of the newspapers. You will understand that I do not propose a forced purchase, or any confiscation. I would undertake even to give—if I were the Government—to every one of these landlords twenty per cent. more for his estate than it will fetch in the market in London or in Dublin, and I say that to do this would produce a marvellous change in the sentiments of the people, and in the condition of agriculture in Ireland.

But I saw in one of the papers a question to which I may give a reply. It was said, How would you like to

have a Commission come down into Lancashire and insist on buying your factories? I can only say that if they will give me 20 per cent. or 10 per cent. more than they are worth, they shall have them to-morrow. But I do not propose that the Commission should come here and insist on buying these estates. They say, further, Why should a man in Ireland keep his estate, and not a man in England who has an estate in Ireland? There is this difference. A man in Ireland, if he has an estate of 10,000 acres, has in it probably his ancestral home. He has ties to this which it would be monstrous to think of severing in such a manner. But a man living in England, who is not an Irishman, and who never comes over here except to receive his rents (which, in fact, he generally receives through his bankers in London), who has no particular tie to this country, and who comes over here occasionally merely because he feels that, as a great proprietor in Ireland, it would be scandalous never to show his face on his property and amongst his tenants—to such a man there would be no hardship if he should part with his land at a fair price.

I have been charged with saying severe things of the English aristocracy. Now, this is not true in the sense in which it is imputed to me. I have always said that there are many men in the English aristocracy who would be noblemen in the sight of their fellow-men although they had no titles and no coronets. There are men amongst them of as undoubted patriotism as any man in this building, or in this island, and there are men amongst them, who when they saw that a great public object was to be gained for the benefit of their fellow-men, would make as great sacrifices as any one of us would be willing to do. I am of opinion therefore—I may be wrong, but I will not believe it until it is proved—I am of opinion that if this question were discussed in Parliament when next the Irish land question is discussed, and if there was a general sentiment in the House c Commons that some measure like thi would be advantageous for Ireland,— and if it were so expressed, it may b assumed that it would be accepted t a large extent by the people of th United Kingdom,—then I think tha a Commission so appointed would fin no difficulty whatever in discoverin noblemen and rich men in England who are the possessors of great estate in Ireland, who would be willing t negotiate for their transfer, and tha Commission, by the process I have in dicated, might transfer them graduall but speedily to the tenant-farmers c this country.

I am told that I have not been mucl in Ireland, and do not know much of it I recollect a man in England during th American war asking me a questio about America. When I gave him a answer which did not agree with hi opinion, he said, 'I think you hav never been in America, have you? I said I had not; and he replied, 'Well I have been there three times, and know something of them.' He wa asking me whether I thought th Yankees would pay when they bor rowed money to carry on the war; an I thought they would. But, as he ha been there, he thought his opinion wa worth more than mine. I told him knew several people who had lived i England all their lives and yet knew very little about England. I am tol that if I were to live in Ireland amon the people, I should have a diffe opinion; that I should think the S Church of a small minority was ho in the face of the great Church of majority; that I should think it was the fault of the landowners or of th law in any degree, but the fault of the tenants, that everything went wr with regard to the land; and th should find that it was the Govern that was mostly right, and the legis tion right, and that it was the peop that were mostly wrong. There be certain questions with regard to country that you may settle in

own house, never having seen that country even upon a map. This you may settle, that what is just is just everywhere, and that men, from those of the highest culture even to those of the most moderate capacity, whatever may be their race, whatever their colour, have implanted in their hearts by their Creator, wiser much than my critics, the knowledge and the love of justice. I will tell you that, since the day when I sat beside O'Connell—and at an earlier day—I have considered this question of Ireland. In 1849, for several weeks in the autumn, and for several weeks in the autumn of 1852, I came to Ireland expressly to examine this question by consulting with all classes of the people in every part of the island. I will undertake to say that I believe there is no man in England who has more fully studied the evidence given before the celebrated Devon Commission in regard to Ireland than I have. Therefore I dare stand up before any Irishman or Englishman to discuss the Irish question. I say that the plans, the theories, the policy, the legislation of my opponents in this matter all have failed signally, deplorably, disastrously, ignominiously, and, therefore, I say that I have a right to come in and offer the people of Ireland, as I would offer to the people of Great Britain and the Imperial Parliament, a wise and just policy upon this question.

You know that I have attended great meetings in England within the last two months, and in Scotland also. I think I am at liberty to tender to you from those hundreds of thousands of men the hand of fellowship and goodwill. I wish I might be permitted when I go back, as in fact I think by this Address that I am permitted to say to them, that amidst the factions by which Ireland has been torn, amidst the many errors that have been committed, amidst the passions that have been excited, amidst the hopes that have been blasted, and amidst the misery that has been endured, there is still in this island, and amongst its people, a heart that can sympathise with those who turn to them with a fixed resolution to judge them fairly, and to do them justice.

I have made my speech. I have said my say. I have fulfilled my small mission to you. I thank you from my heart for the kindness with which you have received me, which I shall never forget. And if I have in past times felt an unquenchable sympathy with the sufferings of your people, you may rely upon it that if there be an Irish Member to speak for Ireland, he will find me heartily by his side.

IRELAND.

VIII.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 14, 1868.

From Hansard.

[This speech was spoken on the occasion of a proposition by Mr. Maguire, M.P. for Cork, for 'a Committee of the whole House to consider the state of Ireland.']

When this debate began it was not my intention to take any part in it; for I had very lately, in another place and to a larger audience, added my contribution to the great national deliberation upon Irish affairs which is now in progress. But the speech of the noble Lord the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and some misunderstanding that has arisen of what I said elsewhere, have changed my intention, and therefore I have to ask for the indulgence of the House, in the hope that I may make on this question a more practical speech than that to which we have just listened.

It is said by eminent censors of the press that this debate will yield about thirty hours of talk, and will end in no result. I have observed that all great questions in this country require thirty hours of talk many times repeated before they are settled. There is much shower and much sunshine between the sowing of the seed and the reaping of the harvest, but the harvest is generally reaped after all.

I was very much struck with what happened on the first night of the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Cork, in the opening portion of his address, described the state of Ireland from his point of view, and the facts he stated are not and cannot be disputed. He said that the Habeas Corpus Act had been suspended for three years in his country—that within the island there was a large military force, amounting, as we have heard to-night—besides 12,000 or more of armed police—to an army of 20,000 men—that in the harbours of Ireland there were ships of war, and in her rivers there were gunboats; and that throughout that country—as throughout this—there has been and is yet considerable alarm with regard to the discontent prevalent in Ireland.

All that is quite true; but when the noble Lord the Chief Secretary opened his speech, the first portion of it [illegible] of a very different [illegible] the legis[illegible] more perila- willing to admit th[illegible] an some of was equally t[illegible] as the peop[illegible] would be condition of [illegible] There [illegible] ith regard to [illegible] m not speak- conside[illegible] may settle in [illegible] against those

the time of the Devon Commission. At the time of the Devon Commission the condition of that country had no parallel in any civilized and Christian nation. By the force of famine, pestilence, and emigration, the population was greatly diminished, and it would be a very extraordinary thing indeed if with such a diminution of the population there was no improvement in the condition of those who remained behind. He showed that wages are higher, and he pointed to the fact that in the trade in and out of the Irish ports they had a considerable increase, and though I will not say that some of those comparisons were quite accurate or fair, I am on the whole ready to admit the truth of the statement the noble Lord made. But now it seems to me that, admitting the truth of what my hon. Friend the Member for Cork said, and admitting equally the truth of what the noble Lord said, there remains before us a question even more grave than any we have had to discuss in past years with regard to the condition of Ireland.

If—and this has been already referred to by more than one speaker—if it be true that with a considerable improvement in the physical condition of the people—if it be true that with a universality of education much beyond that which exists in this island—if it be true that after the measures that have been passed and have been useful, there still remains in Ireland, first of all, what is called Fenianism, which is a reckless and daring exhibition of feeling—beyond that a very wide discontent and disloyalty—and beyond that, amongst the whole of the Roman Catholic population, universal dissatisfaction—and if that be so, surely my hon. Friend the Member for Cork—one of the most useful and eminent of the representatives of Ireland—is right in bringing this ... before the House. And there ...his moment that we ...s connected with ...he people that ...gnitude to ... state of things be true—and remember I have said nothing but what the hon. Member for Cork has said, and I have given my approval to nothing he has said that was not confirmed by the speech of the noble Lord—if this be true, surely all this great effect must have some cause.

We are unworthy of our position as Members of this House, and representatives of our countrymen, if we do not endeavour at least to discover the cause, and if we can discover it, speedily to apply a remedy. The cause is perfectly well known to both sides of the House. The noble Lord, it is clear, knows it even from the tenor of his own speech—he spoke of the question of the land, and of the Church. The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn—whose observations in this debate, if he had offered them, we should have been glad to listen to—understands it, for he referred to the two questions in his speech at the Bristol banquet. The right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government understands it not only as well as I do, but he understands it precisely in the same sense—and more than twenty years ago, when I stated in this House the things, or nearly the things, I stated recently and shall state to-night, he, from your own benches, was making speeches exactly of the same import. And though there is many a thing he seems at times not to recollect, yet I am bound to say he recollects these words, and the impressions, of which these words were the expressions to the House. He referred to an absentee aristocracy and an alien Church. I would not say a syllable about the aristocracy in this matter; if I had to choose a phrase, I would rather say an absentee proprietary and an alien Church.

What is the obvious remedy which for this state of things has been found to be sufficient in every other country? If I could do so by any means that did not violate the rights of property, I should be happy to give to a considerable portion of the farmers of Ireland

some proprietary rights, and to remove from that country the sense of injustice, and the sense—the strongest of all—of the injustice caused by the existence of an alien Church. Just for a moment look at the proposition the noble Lord is about to submit to the House. It is very like the Bill of last year. I will not enter into the details, except to say that he proposes, as he proposed then, that the Government should lend the tenant-farmers of Ireland sums of money, by which they would make improvements, which sums of money were to be repaid by some gradual process to the Government authorities. He proposes that the repayment should be spread over a considerable number of years—I do not know the exact number, and it is not of importance for my argument. These tenant-farmers are very numerous—perhaps too numerous, it may be, for the good of the country—but there they are, and we must deal with them as we find them. The number of them holding under 15 acres is 250,000; holding between 15 acres and 30 acres, 136,000; holding over 30 acres, 158,000—altogether there are more than 540,000 holders of land. It is to these 540,000 land-holders or occupiers that the noble Lord proposes to lend money, on the condition that they make certain improvements, and repay after a certain number of years the sums advanced to them. I think I am right in saying that there is no limitation in the Bill as to the smallness of the holding to which the advance of money will be refused; and therefore the whole 540 000 tenants will be in a position to come to the Government, or to some Commission, or to the Board of Works, or to some authority in Ireland, and ask for money to enable them to improve their farms.

The House will see that if this plan is to produce any considerable result, it will be the source of a number of transactions such as the Government have not had to deal with in any other matter; and I expect that the difficulties will be very great, and that the working out of the plan with any beneficial results will be altogether impossible. What I ask the House is this—if it be right of the noble Lord, to enable him to carry out his plan, to ask the House to pass a measure like this—to lend all these tenants the money for improvements to be repaid after a series of years, would it not be possible for us by a somewhat similar process, and by some step farther in the same direction, to establish to some extent—I am not speaking of extending it all through Ireland—a farmer proprietary throughout the country? If it be right and proper to lend money to improve, it surely may be proper, if it be on other grounds judicious, to lend money to buy. I do not know if the right hon. Member for Calne is here; but very likely he would spare me from the severe criticisms he expended upon my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster.

Now, I am as careful as any man can be, I believe of doing anything by law that shall infringe what you think and what I think are the rights of property. I do not pretend to believe, if you examine the terms strictly, in what is called the absolute property in land. You may toss a sixpence into the sea if you like, but there are things with respect to land which you cannot, and ought not, and dare not do. But I do not want to argue the question of legislation upon that ground. I am myself of opinion that there is no class in the community more interested in a strict adherence to the principles of political economy, worked out in a benevolent and just manner, than the humblest and poorest class in the country. I think they have as much interest in it as the rich, and the House has never known me, and so long as I stand here will never know me, I believe, to propose or advocate anything which shall interfere with what I believe to be, and what if a landowner I would maintain to be, the just right of property in the land.

But, then, I do not think, as some persons seem to think, that the land is really only intended to be in the hands of the rich. I think that is a great mis-

take. I am not speaking of the poor—for the poor man, in the ordinary meaning of the term, cannot be the possessor of land; but what I wish is, that farmers and men of moderate means should become possessors of land and of their farms. About two centuries ago, two very celebrated men endeavoured to form a constitution for Carolina, which was then one of the colonies of this country in America. Lord Shaftesbury, the statesman, and Mr. Locke, the philosopher, framed a constitution with the notion of having great proprietors all over the country, and men under them to cultivate it. I recollect that Mr. Bancroft, the historian of the United States, describing the issue of that attempt and its utter failure, says: 'The instinct of aristocracy dreads the moral power of a proprietary yeomanry, and therefore the perpetual degradation of the cultivators of the soil was enacted.' There is no country in the world, in which there are only great landowners and tenants, with no large manufacturing interest to absorb the population, in which the degradation of the cultivating tenant is not completely assured.

I hope that hon. Members opposite, and hon. Gentlemen on this side who may be disposed in some degree to sympathise with them, will not for a moment imagine that I am discussing this question in any spirit of hostility to the landowners of Ireland. I have always argued that the landowners of Ireland, in their treatment of this question, have grievously mistaken not only the interests of the population, but their own. I was told the other day by a Member of this House, who comes from Ireland, and is eminently capable of giving a sound opinion upon the point, that he believed the whole of Ireland might be bought at about twenty years' purchase; but you know that the land of England is worth thirty years' purchase, and I believe a great deal of it much more,—and it is owing to circumstances which legislation may in a great degree remove that the land of Ireland is worth at this moment so much less than the land of England. Coming back to the question of buying farms, I put it to the House whether, if it be right to lend to landlords for improvements, and to tenants for improving the farms of their landlords, to those who propose to carry on public works, and to repair the ravages of the cattle plague, I ask whether it is not also right for them to lend money in cases where it may be advantageous to landlords, and where they may be very willing to consent to it, to establish a portion of the tenant-farmers of Ireland as proprietors of their farms.

Now, bear in mind that I have never spoken about peasant proprietors. I do not care what name you give them; I am in favour of more proprietors, and some, of course, will be small and some will be large; but it would be quite possible for Parliament, if it thought fit to attempt anything of this kind, to fix a limit below which it would not assist the owner to sell or the purchaser to buy. I believe that you can establish a class of moderate proprietors, who will form a body intermediate between the great owners of land and those who are absolutely landless, which will be of immense service in giving steadiness, loyalty, and peace to the whole population of the island. The noble Lord the Chief Secretary, knows perfectly well at what price he could lend that money, and I will just state to the House one fact which will show how the plan would work. If you were to lend money at 3½ per cent., in thirty-five years the tenant, paying 5 per cent., would have paid the whole money back and all the interest due on it, and would become the owner of his farm; and if you were to take the rate at which you have lent to the Harbour Commissioners, and to repair the ravages of the cattle plague, which is 3¼ per cent., of course the whole sum would be paid back in a shorter period. Therefore, in a term which in former times was not unusual in the length of leases in Ireland, namely, thirty-one years, the

tenant purchasing his farm, without his present rent being raised, would repay to the Government the principal and interest of the sum borrowed for that purpose, would become the owner of his farm, and during the whole of that time would have absolute fixity of tenure, because every year he would be saving more and more, adding field to field, and at the end of the time he would be the proprietor of the soil.

Let not the House imagine that I am proposing to buy up the whole of the land. I am proposing only to buy it in cases where men are willing to sell, and to transfer it only in cases where men are able and willing to buy, and you must know as well as I that there will be many thousands of such cases in a few years. Every Irish proprietor opposite—the noble Lord the Member for Tyrone (Lord C. Hamilton) himself, who made so animated a speech, and appeared so angry with me a short time ago—must know perfectly well that amongst the tenantry of Ireland there is a considerable sum of saved money not invested in farms. Well, that saved money would all come out to carry into effect transactions of this nature; and you will find the most extraordinary efforts made by thousands of tenants to become possessors of their farms by investing their savings in them, by obtaining it may be the assistance of their friends, and by such an industrious and energetic cultivation of the soil as has scarcely ever been seen in Ireland. I said there were landlords willing to sell, and there are cases in which, probably, Parliament might insist upon a sale—for instance, the lands of the London Companies. I never heard of much good that was done by all the money of the London Companies. I was once invited to a dinner by one of these Companies, and certainly it was of a very sumptuous and substantial character, but I believe that, if the tenants of these Companies were proprietors of the lands they cultivate, it would be a great advantage to the counties in which they are situated. I come then to this: I would negotiate with landowners who were willing to sell and tenants who were willing to buy, and I would make the land the great savings-bank for the future tenantry of Ireland. If you like, I would limit the point to which we might go down in the transference of farms, but I would do nothing in the whole transaction which was not perfectly acquiesced in by both landlord and tenant, and I would pay the landlord every shilling he could fairly demand in the market for the estate he proposed to sell.

Well, I hope every Gentleman present will acquit me of intending confiscation, and that we shall have no further misunderstanding upon that point. I venture to say to the noble Lord that this is a plan which would be within compass and management, as compared with that laid down in his Bill, if it worked at all, and I believe that it would do a hundred times as much good, in putting the farmer upon the footing of a holder of land in Ireland. What do hon. Gentlemen think would become of an American Fenian if he came over to Ireland and happened to spend an evening with a number of men who had got possession of their farms. I remember my old friend Mr. Stafford, in the county of Wexford, whom I called upon in 1849, who had bought his farm and had built upon it the best farm-house which I saw in the whole South of Ireland, and who told me that if all the tenantry of Ireland had security for their holdings—he was an old man, and could not easily rise from his chair, though he made an effort to do so—'If they had the security that I have,' said he, 'we'd *bate* the hunger out of Ireland.' If the Fenian spent his evening with such men as these, and proposed his reckless schemes to them, not a single farmer would listen to him for a moment. Their first impression would be that he was mad; their second, perhaps, that the whisky had been too strong for him; and it would end, no doubt, if he persisted in his efforts to seduce them from their

allegiance to the Imperial Government, by their turning him off the premises, though perhaps, knowing that he could do no harm, they might not hand him over to the police.

The other day I passed through the county of Somerset, and through villages that must be well known to many Gentlemen here — Rodney-Stoke and Drayford, I think they were called — and I noticed a great appearance of life and activity about the neighbourhood. I asked the driver of the carriage which had brought me from Wells what was the cause of it. 'Why,' he said, 'don't you know that is the place where the great sale took place?' 'What sale?' I asked. 'Oh! the sale of the Duke's property.' 'What Duke?' 'The Duke of Buckingham. Did you never hear of it? About fifteen years ago his property was sold in lots, and the people bought all the farms. You never saw such a stir in the world.' He pointed out the houses on the hill-side which had been built to replace old tumble-down tenements, the red soil appearing under the plough, and cultivation going on with such general activity as had not been witnessed till within these last few years. The appearance of these villages was such as must strike every traveller from another part of the country, and it was produced by simple means. The great estate of an embarrassed Duke had been divided and sold off; he had not been robbed; the old miserable hovels of the former tenants had been pulled down, and new life and activity had been given to the whole district. If you could have such a change as this in Ireland, you would see such a progress and prosperity that gentlemen would hardly know the district from which they came.

I think it only fair to my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster to say, that I do not believe the time is come in Ireland, and I do not believe it ever will come, when it will be necessary to have recourse to so vast and extraordinary a scheme as that which he has proposed to the House. It appears to me that it is not necessary for Ireland. There is the land — there is the owner — there is the tenant. If the landowners had been a little wiser we might not have had before us to-night the difficulty that now perplexes us. Suppose, for example, they had not been tempted to coerce or to make use of the votes of their tenants; suppose they had not been tempted to withhold leases — undoubtedly the condition of Ireland would have been far superior to what it now is. My hon. Friend the Member for Westminster has some scruples, I believe, on the question of the ballot, but I believe even he would not object to see that admirable machinery of election tried in that country. Do hon. Gentlemen think it not necessary? I was talking, only two days ago, to a Member of this House who sat on one of the Irish election committees—the Waterford committee, I think—and he said: 'We could not unseat the Members, though the evidence went to show a frightful state of things; it was one of the most orderly elections they have in that country—only three men killed and twenty-eight seriously wounded.' After all, we may smile, and some of you may laugh at this, but it is not a thing to be laughed at. It is a very serious matter, but it exists in no country in the world where the ballot is in operation.

If you were to try that mode of election in Ireland it would have two results: it would make your elections perfectly tranquil, and at the same time it would withdraw from the landowner—and a most blessed thing for the landowner himself this would be—it would withdraw from him the great temptation to make use of his tenant's vote for the support of his own political party; and if that temptation were withdrawn, you would have much more inducement to grant leases to many of your tenants, and you would take a step highly favourable, not to the prosperity of your tenants only, but to your own prosperity and your own honour. Now, Sir, I shall say no more upon that

It reminds me of an anecdote which is related by Addison. He says that in his time there was a man who made a living by cheating the country people. He was not a Cabinet Minister,—he was only a mountebank,—and he set up a stall, and sold pills that were very good against the earthquake. Well, that is about the state of things that we are in now. There is an earthquake in Ireland. Does anybody doubt it? I will not go into the evidence of it, but I will say that there has been a most extraordinary alarm—some of it extravagant, I will admit—throughout the whole of the three kingdoms; and although Fenianism may be but a low, a reckless, and an ignorant conspiracy, the noble Lord has admitted that there is discontent and disaffection in the country; and when the Member for one of the great cities of Ireland comes forward and asks the Imperial Parliament to discuss this great question—this social and political earthquake under which Ireland is heaving—the noble Lord comes forward and offers that there shall be a clerical-governed endowed University for the sons, I suppose, of the Catholic gentlemen of Ireland. I have never heard a more unstatesmanlike or more unsatisfactory proposition; and I believe the entire disfavour with which it has been received in this House is only a proper representation of the condemnation which it will receive from the great majority of the people of the three kingdoms.

Do not let any one suppose that I join in the terms which I regretted to hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud, and still less that I join in the, in my opinion, more offensive terms which fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne. There can be no good in our attacking either the Catholic population or the Catholic hierarchy of Ireland. We have our duty straight before us, which is to do both the hierarchy and the people justice. We are not called upon to support the plan of the Government, and I believe the people of Great Britain, and a very large portion of the people of Ireland, will rejoice when the House of Commons shall reject a proposition which is adverse to the course we have taken for many years past, and a proposition which would have no better effect in tranquillising Ireland in the future than the increase of the grant to Maynooth did more than twenty years ago. Sir Robert Peel at that time, with the most honourable and kindly feeling to Ireland, proposed to increase the grant to Maynooth, and it was passed, I think, by a large majority of the House, I being one of a very few persons on this side of the House who opposed the grant. I was as kindly disposed to the Catholics of Ireland as Sir Robert Peel, but I was satisfied that was not the path of tranquillisation, and that if he trod that path it would before any long time have to be retraced; and I think, if you now proceed upon the course recommended by the right hon. Gentleman, you will fail in the pacification of Ireland, and the time will come when you will have to retrace the steps he invites you to tread in now.

Now, Sir, I think we have arrived at this point of the question—that we have absolutely arrived at it, and there is no escape from it—that it does not matter in the least whether the right hon. Gentleman sits on the Treasury Bench, or whether the right hon. Member for South Lancashire takes his place, or whether the two should unite—which is a very bold figure of speech—but I say that if the two should unite, it could not alter this fact, that the Protestant supremacy, as represented by a State Church in Ireland, is doomed, and is, in fact, at an end. Whatever are the details, and I admit that they will be very difficult details in some particulars, which may be introduced into the measure which shall enact the great change that the circumstances of Ireland and the opinion of the United Kingdom have declared to be necessary, this, at least, we have come to, that perfect religious equality henceforth,

and not only religious equality, but equality on the voluntary principle, must be granted.

Some hon. Gentlemen opposite have spoken about a pamphlet which has recently been written by Lord Russell. I would speak of Lord Russell, as the House knows, as I would always of a man older than myself, and whose services to the country have been so long and so great; I speak of him with great respect, and I say that the pamphlet is written with wonderful fire, that it contains in it very much that is interesting, and very much that is true, but its one fault is that it should have been published about forty years ago. Lord Russell's proposition is politically just in the division which he proposes of the property of the Church in Ireland and, if public opinion had not condemned the creation of new Established Churches, it might have been possible to have adopted his scheme as it is. But I say the time has gone by for the establishment of new State Churches. They will never again be planted as an institution in this country, and I suspect there is no other country in the world which has not an Established Church that would wish to possess one. But, if the House will allow me, I should like to advert to a little scheme on this matter which I was bold enough to explain to my countrymen on the occasion to which I have referred. It is not a new scheme in my mind, for the whole principle of it, with an elaborate argument in its favour, were published very widely in the year 1852, in a letter which I wrote to my hon. Friend the Member for Kilkenny (Sir John Gray), who was one of certain persons, Members of Parliament and others, who met in conference in Dublin on the question of religious equality in Ireland. I only state this to show that it is no new idea, and that I have had plenty of time to consider it. There have been great objections to the plan, and amongst those who have objected to it, as might possibly have been expected, were gentlemen of the Liberation Society. Now, I know many of the leading members of that Society, and they are very good men. Even those who may think they are mistaken would, if they knew them, join with me in that opinion. One of them, at least, who was once a Member of this House, and, in all probability, will be here again—Mr. Miall—is not only a good man, but he is a great man. I judge him by the nobleness of his principles, and by the grand devotion which he has manifested to the teaching of what he believes to be a great truth. I take criticisms from them kindly, as we ought to take them from our friends when they are honestly given.

What is the condition of Ireland at this moment with which you have to deal? There is not only the Church which it is proposed to disestablish, but you have the *Regium Donum*, which, if the Church be disestablished, must necessarily be withdrawn; and you have, if these two things happen, a grant to Maynooth, the Act conferring which must necessarily be repealed. Now, in doing these things the House will observe that we shall disturb all the three principal sects or Churches in Ireland, and we can only do it, or attempt to do it, on the ground that we are about to accomplish some great public good. Well, my proposal, which some hon. Gentlemen, I dare say, will have some vague idea of, was made with the view of easing Parliament in the great transaction, from which I believe it cannot escape. It is a great thing in statesmanship, when you are about to make a change which is inevitable, and which shocks some, disturbs more, and makes hesitating people hesitate still more—it is a great thing, I say, if you can make the past slide into the future without any great jar, and without any great shock to the feelings of the people. And in doing these things the Government can always afford to be generous and gracious to those whom they are obliged to disturb.

We have found that this has been the case when needful changes have been proposed; for instance, hon. Gentlemen

will recollect, when tithe commutation for Ireland was passed, that there was a certain concession made to the landowners of Ireland, to induce them to acquiesce in the proposition of Parliament. We know that when slavery was abolished a considerable sum of money was voted. Lord Derby proposed in this House that compensation should be given to the slaveowners. If it had not been for that, slavery would before long have been abolished by violence. But Parliament thought it was much better to take the step it did take, and I am not, at this period of time, about for a moment to dispute its wisdom. In all these things we endeavour, if we are forced to make a great change, to make it in such a manner as that we shall obtain the acquiescence and the support, if possible, of those who are most likely to be nearly affected by it. Suppose we were going to disestablish the Church of Scotland—and I understand that there are a great number belonging to the Established Church of Scotland who are coming round to the opinion that it would be much to their benefit, and I think for the benefit of their Church, if it were disestablished—if we were going to disestablish the Church of Scotland or the Church of England, no person for a moment would suppose that, after having taken all the tithes and all the income from these Churches, you would also take all the churches and all the parsonage-houses from the Presbyterian people of Scotland, or from the Episcopal Church people in England. You would not do anything of that kind. You would do to them as we should wish, if we were in their position, that the Government and Parliament should do to us. Do what you have to do thoroughly for the good of the country, but do it in such a manner as shall do least harm, and as shall gain the largest amount of acquiescence from those whom you are about to affect. I venture to say that such is the course we should take about Ireland.

I am very free in speaking on these matters. I am not a Catholic in the sense of Rome. I am not a Protestant in the sense in which that word is used in Ireland. I am not connected with a powerful sect in England. I think, from my training, and education, and association, and thought on these questions, I stand in a position which enables me to take as fair and unimpassioned a view of the matter as perhaps any man in the House. Now, if I were asked to give my advice, and if I am not asked I shall give it—I should propose that where there are congregations in Ireland—I am speaking now, of course, of the present Established Church—who would undertake to keep in repair the church in which they have been accustomed to worship, and the parsonage-house in which their ministers live, Parliament should leave them in the possession of their churches and of their parsonage-houses. And I believe I speak the sentiment of every Catholic Member on this side of the House, and probably of every intelligent Catholic in Ireland, not only of the laity but of the hierarchy and the priesthood, when I say that they would regard such a course as that on the part of Parliament as just, under the circumstances in which we are placed. Well, then, of course there would be no more bishops appointed by the Crown, and that institution in Ireland would come to an end, except it were continued upon the principle upon which bishops are appointed in Scotland. All State connection would be entirely abolished. You would then have all alike. The Protestants would have their churches and parsonage-houses as they have now. But the repairs of them, and the support of their ministers, would be provided by their congregations, or by such an organisation as they chose to form. The Catholics would provide, as they have hitherto done so meritoriously and with a remarkable liberality, for themselves.

No greater instance of generosity and fidelity to their Church can be seen in the world than that which has been manifested by the Catholic people of

Ireland. They have their churches and their priests' houses in many places. There is no pretence for meddling with them. In the north of Ireland, where the Presbyterians are most numerous, they would also have their places of worship, and their ministers' houses as they have now. All the Churches, therefore, in that respect would be on an equality. Well, now, the real point of this question, and which will create in all probability much feeling in Parliament and in the country, is, what should be done on the question of the Maynooth Grant, and on the question of the *Regium Donum?* They must be treated alike, I presume. If you preserve the life interests of the ministers and bishops of the Established Church, it may be right to preserve the life interests of the ministers of the Presbyterian Church, and it may be right also in some way or other to make some provision that shall not in the least degree bring them under the control of the State. And some provision might have to be made to the Catholic Church in lieu of the Maynooth Grant, which, of course, you would be obliged to withdraw. These are points which I will not discuss in detail. I merely indicate them for the sake of showing to the House, and to a great number of people who are regarding it with even more feeling than we do, what are some of the difficulties of this question—difficulties which must be met—difficulties which it will require all the moderation, all the Christian feeling, and all the patriotism which this House can muster on both sides of it, with the view of settling this question permanently, and to the general satisfaction of the three kingdoms. Now, I will go no further, but to say that whatever is done—if a single sixpence is given by Parliament, in lieu of the Maynooth Grant, or in lieu of the *Regium Donum*, it must be given on these terms only—and on that matter I think Lord Russell has committed a great error—that it becomes the absolute property of the Catholics or of the Presbyterians—it must be as completely their property as the property of the great Wesleyan body in this country, or of the Independents, or of the Baptists, belongs to these bodies. It must be property which Parliament can never pretend to control, or regulate, or withdraw.

And having consented to that condition, the three Churches of Ireland would be started as voluntary Churches, and instead of fighting, as I am sorry to say they have been fighting far longer than within the memory of man, I hope soon there would be a competition among them which should do most for the education, the morals, and the Christianity of the population who are within their instruction and guidance. Now, Protestants in this country — I think almost all Protestants — object very strongly to Rome. The Nonconformists object to endowments. They sometimes, I think, confound establishments with endowments. I think it absolutely essential that establishments should cease, and that there should be nothing in the way of endowment unless it be some small provision such as that which I have indicated; which it might be necessary to make when you are withdrawing certain things which the Churches in Ireland had supposed were theirs in perpetuity.

Now, one word which I would say to the Nonconformist people of England and Scotland, if the House will allow me to speak, is this—they should bear in mind that the whole of this property which is now in the possession of the Established Church of Ireland is Irish property. It does not belong to Scotland or to England, and it would be a measure intolerable and not to be thought of, that it should be touched or dealt with in any manner that is not in accordance with the feelings and the interests of the people of Ireland. Let any man who to-morrow criticises this part of my speech ask himself what an Irish Parliament freely elected would do with the ecclesiastical funds of Ireland. I think the Presbyterians of Scotland, the Churchmen and Nonconform-

ists of England, have no right to suppose themselves to be judges with regard to religious matters in Ireland. They have a perfect right to say to Parliament through their representatives, 'We will discontinue the State Church in Ireland, and we will create no other State Churches.' But that seems to be about the extent of the interference which they are entitled to in this matter.

I hope I have explained with tolerable clearness the views which I have felt it my duty to lay before the House on the occasion of this great question. The House will see, and I think hon. Gentlemen opposite will admit, that I am at least disposed to treat it as a great question which, if it be dealt with, should be dealt with in the most generous, gracious, and, if you like, tender manner by Parliament, as respects the feelings and interests of all who are most directly concerned. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, in his speech last night, said that this proposal to disestablish the Established Church of Ireland, was, in point of fact, in some sort a revolution. This, at any rate, I am satisfied, would be not only an entirely bloodless revolution, but a revolution full of blessing to the Irish people.

I have not said a word—I never said a word in this House, and, I believe, never out of it, to depreciate the character of the clergymen of the Established Church in Ireland. I think no religious ministers are placed in a more unfortunate position, and I am satisfied that many of them feel it to be so. I have not the least doubt, when this transaction is once accomplished, that they will breathe more freely. I believe they will be more potent in their ministrations, and that their influence, which must, or ought to be, considerable, will be far more extensive than it has been, and far more beneficial in the districts in which they live. But being so great a question, as the Home Secretary described it, it can only be settled by mutual and reasonable concession. The main principle being secured, that State Church supremacy is abolished in Ireland, and that the Irish Churches are henceforth to be free Churches upon the voluntary principle, then I should be willing, and I would recommend every person in the country whom my voice may reach, to make any reasonable concession that can be suggested in the case. So anxious am I that it should be done, that I should be delighted to co-operate with the right hon. Gentleman and with hon. Members on the opposite side of the House, in support of any just measure for settling this great question. But I say, if it ever does come to be dealt with by a great and powerful Minister, let it be dealt with in a great and generous spirit. I would counsel to all men moderation and justice. It is as necessary to Protestants as to Catholics and to Nonconformists that they should endeavour to get rid of passion in discussing this question.

We are, after all, of one religion. I imagine that there will come a time in the history of the world when men will be astonished that Catholics and Protestants have had so much animosity against and suspicion of each other. I accept the belief in a grand passage, which I once met with in the writings of the illustrious founder of the colony of Pennsylvania. He says that 'The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion, and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the diverse liveries they wear here make them strangers.' Now, may I ask the House to act in this spirit, and then our work will be easy. The noble Lord, towards the conclusion of his speech, spoke of the cloud which rests at present over Ireland. It is a dark and heavy cloud, and its darkness extends over the feelings of men in all parts of the British Empire. But there is a consolation which we may all take to ourselves. An inspired king and bard and prophet has left us words which are not only the expression of a fact, but which we may take as the utterance of a prophecy. He says, 'To the

upright there ariseth light in the darkness.' Let us try in this matter to be upright. Let us try to be just. That cloud will be dispelled. The dangers which surround us will vanish, and we may yet have the happiness of leaving to our children the heritage of an honourable citizenship in a united and prosperous Empire.

IRELAND.

IX.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 1, 1868.

[This speech was made in the debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions for disestablishing the Irish Church.]

THE House will not expect me to follow the legal argument of the hon. and learned Member who has just sat down. I entertain a firm belief that those legal cobwebs which are spread, and which are supposed to, and do in the minds of many Gentlemen, interpose between the completion of a great act of justice, will be swept away before long by the almost unanimous opinion of the people of the three kingdoms.

During this debate, which has yet lasted only two nights, there has been, if not a remarkable change of opinion, a remarkable change of expression. Last night we had an interesting speech from the noble Lord who generally sits opposite me, the noble Lord the Member for Stamford. I refer only to the beginning of his speech, in which he spoke of his affection for the principle of a Church Establishment. There was a hesitation in his manner; he had a strong love for his principle, but it appeared to me that he thought the time was come when even that cherished principle would have to be surrendered. From the Treasury bench we had a speech from the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and when he sat down it is difficult to say what was the precise impression made upon the House; but I think, on the whole, the impression made on the other side of the House—his own side—was by no means a comfortable one. Now to me it is, and I think to the House it is, a misfortune that we have a Government that speaks with a different voice from night to night. We had it last year, and I presume, from the example of the debate which lately took place on the motion of the hon. Member for Cork, and from the debate on this motion, we are about to see a repetition of it.

The fact is, that the position of the Government is one of great difficulty and perplexity; to speak plainly, it is one which I should call, in our Constitutional system, altogether unnatural. They are the Ministers, the leaders of a minority of the House, and whilst they sat as leaders of the minority in opposition they defended the principles of their party, and they apparently regarded all their past career with satisfaction; but the moment they are transferred to the Treasury bench they find themselves in this difficulty, that although their party may still wish to cling to their past opinions, there [illegible] fact, something in th[illegible] may take as the utter- something th[illegible] prophecy. He says, 'To the

whole kingdom, which teaches them that their past opinions are impossible in their new position.

The noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn made a speech not long ago at Bristol, and in that speech he expressed what I am quite sure were his honest opinions with regard to the condition of Ireland. He stated that the condition of Ireland was one painful and dangerous, and to us, in appearance at least, discreditable. He said we had a strange and perplexing problem to solve; that in Ireland there was a miserable state of things. Then he said, 'If we look for a remedy, who can give us an intelligible answer? Ireland is the question of the hour.' And that is not altogether at variance—in fact, I should say not at all at variance—with the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who told us, as far as he knew, the facts about his country. But immediately afterwards we had the description of the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, to the effect that there was no crisis at all—that, in point of fact, the condition of Ireland was a normal condition, and that there was no necessity for anything remarkable or unusual in the legislation that was required. Now, to-night we have had a speech from the Home Secretary. I may say that every speaker on that side of the House has admitted that his speech is entirely in opposition, in its tone, its purpose, and its principle, to the speech of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn. It seems to me that the Home Secretary to-night answered the Foreign Secretary of last night—and I suppose if the debate goes on until Thursday, probably the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, or perhaps the Secretary of State for India, will answer the speech of the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

But all this shows us that the House is in a wrong position. We have a minority in office which cannot assert its ...fety, nor can it with ...ur views; and thus, when, on that side of the House, a Minister gets up and makes what is called a liberal speech on this question to us who are in opposition, that creates discontent; and then another Minister rises and makes a speech of an exactly opposite character, to reconcile that discontent. There is, in fact, confusion and chaos in the House. We have a Government which is not a Government—and we have an Opposition which is not an Opposition, because really we do not oppose anything that you propose. Your propositions are not based upon your own principles, which you held when you sat on this side of the House, but on our principles, and therefore we are not in opposition at all, but we help you as much as possible to enforce, not your own principles, but ours. Whatever compensation it may be to right hon. Gentlemen who sit on that bench and enjoy the dignities and emoluments of office, I think there are many honourable men on whom I am looking at this moment who do not observe the course of these proceedings with entire satisfaction.

But now, notwithstanding these difficulties, there remains this great question which we must discuss, and which, if possible, we must settle. I say, notwithstanding some observations to the contrary, that the people of the three kingdoms are looking with anxious suspense at the course which Parliament may take on this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary on one occasion spoke of this question, of this proposition, as being something in the nature of a revolution. But, if it be a revolution, after all it is not so great a one as we might suppose from the force and energy of the speech which he has delivered to-night—a speech which, although I differ from his views, was, I must say, a very good speech—in which he brought into the House a good deal of the energy of the people of that great county (Yorkshire) from which he comes. But we are now about to deal with a question which only

affects, according to the census, something under 700,000 people. I observe hon. Gentlemen talk of the Protestants of Ireland as being one-fourth of the whole population—of being a million and a half. All that is fanciful exaggeration. According to the census the Episcopalians are not more than 700,000, and let hon. Gentlemen bear this in mind—when the census enumerators go round, if a man is not a Catholic or a Presbyterian, he is put down, unless he can state he is of some other sect, as an Episcopalian. And judging from what we know, there must be out of the 700,000 a considerable number who never go to church, and, politically or religiously, have no interest in it. Therefore, I believe, speaking correctly, it would not be possible to show that there are Episcopalians in Ireland in intimate connection with the Established Church to the amount of more than from half a million to 600,000.

Now, this will not come to more than 100,000 families, that is, will not be very much more than the population of Liverpool, or Manchester, or Glasgow; so that, in point of fact, this question, which is held to be a revolution,—this great question affects only a population equal to that of the city of Glasgow, or of Liverpool, or of Manchester. And it is for a population so small as this, I am told—for I am not versed in computations of this kind—you have no less than twelve bishops and archbishops, and that you have devoted for their services—for their religious services—not less than the annual income arising from a capital sum estimated to be, at least, ten or twelve millions sterling. Now, if their system of teaching is really very good, I must say there ought to be in Ireland a more perfectly moral and religious population among the Church Protestants than there is in any other country in the world.

What, then, are we about to do? What is the House about to do if we adopt the resolutions of the right hon. Member for South Lancashire? If the House accept the advice of the majority sitting on this side, what will be done? We are not going to commit any vital wrong upon that one city population of 500,000 or 600,000. When we have done everything that I have suggested should be done, we shall leave them in as comfortable a position as the majority of the people of Scotland are in at this moment. We shall leave them as well off as eight or nine-tenths of the population of Wales are; we shall leave them as well off as half, and not the least religious half, of the people of England are; we shall leave them as well off as the English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish people who form the population in our colonies, whether in North America or Australia. And what can be more monstrous than for Gentlemen to come here from Ireland—and there may be some from England—and tell us we are bringing about a revolution, that we are committing an enormous oppression, that we are hazarding the loyalty of the people of the North of Ireland, when, after all, the most and worst which any of us proposes to do is that the Church population of Ireland will be left at least as well off as any of the various populations of the Empire I have just described? I hope hon. Gentlemen opposite will be convinced that it is not a bottomless abyss we are going to plunge their friends into.

Although it is a very small question for the Church in Ireland and for the Church people, I hold it is an infinitely larger question for the Catholic population. The hon. and learned Gentleman who spoke last relies much upon law. I suppose it will be admitted that there are only two pretences on which this State Church—the Protestant Church—can exist in Ireland. The one is religious—the other is political. Now, has anybody been able to show that, as a religious institution, it has not been a deplorable failure? because clearly, the original intention, the original hope was, that the people of Ireland would be drawn from the Church of Rome and brought into harmony with the Church of England. I under-

take to say, from the time of its first establishment until now, reckoning up all the Catholics on the one side and the Protestants on the other, that it could not be shown, and is not to be believed, that it has ever added really one person in every hundred persons to the actual number of Protestants in the kingdom of Ireland. It has been an entire failure—a failure deplorable, and almost ludicrous, as an engine for converting the Catholic population. But it has not only not made Catholics into Protestants, but it has made Catholics in Ireland more intensely Roman than the members of that Church are found to be in any other country in Europe or in America. And what is more than that, I think it can be demonstrated that the existence of the Protestant Church in Ireland, whether missionary or not in pretence, has not only not converted the Catholics themselves, but has made it absolutely impossible that anybody else, or any other Church, should convert them. Because, if you look how the Church has been connected with the State, and with the politics of the country, with the supremacy of the landed proprietors, with the supremacy of the Protestant party, with all the dark records of the past, you will see the effect has been to make Catholicism in Ireland not only a faith, but absolutely a patriotism.

I think I might appeal to every Member of the House who now hears me whether, if he had been placed in Ireland with his father before him among the Catholic population—I might ask him whether he would not have felt that if he threw off his allegiance to his Church, and if he entered the portals of this garrison Church, that it would have been to him not only a change of faith, but a denial as it were of his birth and of his country. I have felt always in considering this question—and I have considered it much for twenty-five years past—that all the circumstances of that Church in Ireland have been such as to stimulate the heart of every Catholic to a stronger adherence to his own faith, and to a determined and unchangeable rejection of the faith and of the Church which were offered to him by the hands of conquest. There is one point on this, too, which is important, that the more you have produced dissatisfaction with Imperial rule in Ireland, the more you have thrown the population into the hands of Rome. Now, I hope I shall offend no Catholic Member in this House when I say that I consider it one of the greatest calamities of the world that there are in many countries millions of Catholic population who are liable to be directed in much of their conduct, and often in their political conduct, through their bishops and clergy from the centre of the city of Rome. I think that is a misfortune—I think it is a misfortune to the freedom of the world. And I think, moreover, that it is a misfortune to every Catholic Church in every country, for it tends to prevent it from being wholly national, and it prevents also such changes and such reformations as, I believe, are necessary in the progress of every Church. We see some result of this in other countries of Europe. Notably, at this moment, in Austria, even in that country which we lately thought was the very last in the race of freedom, there is a contest going on with Rome. But there probably is no country in Europe at this moment in which the Catholic Church and population are more entirely subject than in Ireland to the direct influence of a certain number of persons, of whom most of us know nothing, who pull the strings of the Catholic world in the city of Rome. I attribute much of this, which I think a great evil, to the existence of the Protestant Church in Ireland. You know perfectly well that the great discontent of Ireland is chiefly entertained by the Catholic population, and you know that this population is even at this moment, more than it was some years ago, subject directly to political influences from Rome. But I am satisfied that it is for the interest of the Catholic population, and that it is for the interest of this great nation

and of this Imperial Government, that whatsoever be the tie between the Catholic population of Ireland and the Government in Ireland, we ought at least to take away every obstacle that can lessen in the smallest degree the loyalty of that people to the Imperial Crown.

And if this Church has failed as a religious institution, how stands it as a political institution? It was intended not only to convert the Catholics, but to secure the Union. An hon. Gentleman, with a courage that I should not like to imitate, said that if the 5th Article of the Act of Union should be altered, then in point of fact the Union is as good as abolished. I see the hon. Gentleman up there, and I think he is not the only one who has said it in the course of this discussion. It is a very old and not a very strange device to expect the people to be made loyal through the instrumentality of the clergy. I know that many centuries ago a monk of some celebrity at the Court of Louis of Bavaria told that monarch, 'You defend me with the sword, and I will defend you with the pen.' We have been during all this time defending this Church with the sword. The sword has scarcely ever been out of the hand of the governing power in Ireland. And if a fair, simple, and unadorned narrative were given of the transactions of this Parliament with Ireland, with regard to its different enactments, coercive restrictions, suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act, and so forth, it would form a narrative which would astonish the world and would discredit us. Sir, I am afraid it is not too much to say that, in support of this supremacy, many victims have perished on the scaffold in Ireland, and that the fields of Ireland have been more than once drenched with the blood of her people. But, after all this is done, we are not a bit more secure.

It is no matter what Government sits on the bench opposite. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Lancashire was there two years ago, and on that occasion, by the consent of his Colleagues, the then Home Secretary had to introduce the Bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Now you are on that side of the House, and you have to do the same. Nobody says it is not necessary. I am not prepared to say it has not been necessary at other times. But surely if this be necessary—and if there is this painful duty to perform at various times—it shows that the Union is not very secure in Ireland. In fact, Sir, it is the most painful thing that we have witnessed lately, that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act has become so common that it causes almost no remark. The measure is introduced into the House. An Irish Member makes a feeble protest against it, and it is passed. and we suspend the liberties of one of the three kingdoms from year to year. And the Prime Minister has the courage—I might almost use another word—he has the courage to say there is no crisis, and that things are going on very much as usual, and that the House of Commons is not required to do much or care much for that country.

What you have in Ireland is this. There is anarchy, which is subdued by force, and after centuries of rule—not our rule, but that of our forefathers—we have got no farther. We have not reconciled Ireland to us, we have done none of those things which the world says we ought to have done; and at this moment—in the year 1868—we are discussing the question whether it is possible to make any change with reference to the Established Church in Ireland which will bring about a better state of feeling between the people and the Imperial Government. Sir, I am afraid there has been very little statesmanship and very much neglect, and I think we ought to take shame to ourselves, and try to get rid of some of our antiquated prejudices on this matter, and look at it as men would look at it from a distance, as men whose vision is not impaired by the passionate feelings which have so often prevailed in this

country with regard to this question. What, then, is the remedy that is now offered? What do people say of it? Now, I challenge any hon. Gentleman on the other side to deny this, that out of half a million Episcopalians in Ireland there are many—there are some in the Irish nobility, some landed proprietors, some magistrates, even some of the clergy, a great many Irishmen—who believe at this moment that it is of the very first importance that the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Lancashire should be carried.

I am not going to overstate my case. I do not say that all of them are of that opinion. Of that half-million, say that one-fourth—I will state no number—but of this I am quite certain, that there is an influential, a considerable, and, as I believe, a wise minority, who are in favour of distinct and decided action on the part of Parliament with regard to this question. But if you ask the whole Roman Catholic population of Ireland, be they nobles, or landed proprietors, or merchants, or farmers, or labourers,—the whole number of the Catholic population in Ireland being, I suppose, eight or nine times the number of Episcopalians—these are probably, without exception, of opinion that it would be greatly advantageous and just to their country if the proposition submitted on this side of the House should receive the sanction of Parliament. Now, if some Protestants and all Catholics are agreed that we should remove this Church, what would happen if Ireland was 1,000 miles away, and we were discussing it as we might discuss the same state of affairs in Canada? If we were to have in Canada and in Australia all this disloyalty among the Roman Catholic population, owing to the existence of a State Church there, the House would be unanimous that the State Church in those colonies should be abolished, and that perfect freedom in religion should be given.

But there is a fear in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary that the malady which would exist in Ireland might cross the Channel and appear in England; that in fact the disorder of Voluntaryism, as he deems it, in Ireland, like any other contagious disorder, might cross the Channel, by force of the west wind, lodging first in Scotland, and then crossing the Tweed and coming south to England. I think the right hon. Gentleman went so far as to say that he was so much in favour of religious equality, that if you went so far as to disestablish the Church in Ireland, he would recommend the same policy for England. Now, with regard to that, I will give you an anecdote which has reference to Scotland. Some years ago I had the pleasure of spending some days in Scotland at the house of the late Lord Aberdeen, after he had ceased to be Prime Minister. He was talking of the disruption of the Church of Scotland, and he said that nothing in the course of his public life had given him so much pain as the disruption, and the establishment of the Free Church in that country; but he said he had lived long enough to discover that it was one of the greatest blessings that had ever come to Scotland. He said that they had a vast increase in the number of churches, a corresponding increase in the number of manses or ministers' houses, and that schools had increased, also, to an extraordinary extent; that there had been imparted to the Established Church a vitality and energy which it had not known for a long period; and that education, morality, and religion had received a great advancement in Scotland in consequence of that change. Therefore, after all, it is not the most dreadful thing in the world—not so bad as a great earthquake—or as many other things that have happened. I am not quite sure that the Scottish people themselves may not some day ask you—if you do not yourselves introduce and pass it without their asking—to allow their State Church to be disestablished.

I met only the other day a most intelligent gentleman from the north of Scotland, and he told me that the

minister of the church he frequented had 250*l.* a-year from the Establishment Funds, which he thought very much too little, and he felt certain that, if the Establishment were abolished, and the Church made into a Free Church, the salary of the minister would be immediately advanced to at least 500*l.* a-year. That is a very good argument for the ministers, and we shall see by-and-by, if the conversion of Scotland proceeds much further, that you may be asked to disestablish their Church. The hon. Member for Honiton last night quoted something which, I dare say, he did not recollect accurately—something which I had said respecting the Church of England; but the fact is that the Church of England is not suffering from the assaults of the Liberation Society; it is suffering from a very different complaint. It is an internal complaint. You have had it before one of the courts of law within the last few days, and a very curious decision has been given,—that candles are lawful, but incense is something terrible, and cannot be allowed; and then the newspapers tell you that on the very next Sunday there is more incense in that particular church which has been complained of than there ever had been before.

I will tell hon. Gentlemen opposite what it is that endangers the State Church now—I mean a State Church like this in England, against which there is no violent political assault. It is the prevalence of zeal. Whenever zeal creeps into a State Church, it takes naturally different forms—one strongly Evangelical, another strongly High Church or Ritualist—and these two species of zeal work on and on in opposition, until finally there comes a catastrophe, and it is found that it is not Mr. Miall and the Liberation Society, although they have prepared men's minds not to dread it, but it is something wholly different, within the Church itself, that causes the disruption of the Church. The Scottish disruption did not take place from any assaults from without—it took place from zeal and difficulties within; and if you could keep the whole of the Church of England perfectly harmonious within its own borders, it would take a very daring prophet who would undertake to point out the time when it would be disestablished.

We will confine ourselves, therefore, to Ireland, and I will ask hon. Gentlemen this: I believe Gentlemen opposite do not usually reject the view which we entertain, that the abolition of the State Church in Ireland would tend to lessen the difficulties of governing that country. I think there is scarcely an hon. Gentleman on the other side, who has not some doubt of his previous opinions, some slight misgiving on this point, and some disposition to accept our view of the case. Well, why should you be afraid? Even children, we know, can be induced, by repeated practice, to go into a dark room without fear. You have always, somebody said the other night, lions in the path; but I will not dignify them with the name of lions—they are but hobgoblins. Now, when you have seen and handled them, as you have a great many times since I have been in the habit of speaking face to face with you, these things are found, after all, to be only hobgoblins; you have learned, after all, that they are perfectly harmless; and when you thought we were doing you harm, and upsetting the Constitution, you have found that, after all, we were doing you good, and that the Constitution was rather stronger than it was before. Let me point out for a moment some of these changes that were found at the time to be of great difficulty, but have been found to be very wise and good afterwards.

When I came into this House, nearly twenty-five years ago, our colonial system was wholly different from what it is now. It has been changed: Sir William Molesworth and Joseph Hume were mainly the authors in Parliament of that change. Well, all our colonies, as we all admit, are much more easily governed and much more loyal than they were in those days. Turning then to our financial system—and I really do not

want to offend any one by mentioning this—you know that our financial system, since Sir Robert Peel came into office in 1841, has been completely changed, and yet the revenue of the country is larger, which I regard as a misfortune—and not only larger, but more secure by far, if Parliament requires it, than it was at any previous period of our history. Take the old protective system, which the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) and some others have not forgotten. Free-trade was a frightful monster. But the protective system is gone; and now every candid man amongst you will admit that industry, being more free throughout the country, is better rewarded, and that the land, which you said would go out of cultivation, and become of no value, sells for a higher price in the market than it ever brought before.

There are two other points on which I wish to add a word. One was mentioned last night after many Members had gone home. The balance of power was once considered the beginning and end of our foreign policy, and I am not sure that there are not some old statesmen in the other House who believe in it even yet. What was done last night? The noble Lord the Member for Haddingtonshire, who comes up from Scotland brimfull of enthusiasm for impossible projects, proposed to put in words which had been rejected from the preamble of the Mutiny Bill relating to the preservation of the balance of power. What did one of your most distinguished Ministers, the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for War, say in reference to the proposition? He said he thought it singular that the hon. Member for Chatham should have proposed to omit the words, because they really meant nothing, but he was still more surprised that the noble Lord should have asked to have them replaced. Well, thus you see that this balance of power is gone, and yet England, I will undertake to say, under the rational and fair administration of foreign affairs by the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, is just as much respected by all foreign Powers as she was when we were ready to meddle in every stupid quarrel that occurred upon the Continent of Europe.

Now, there is only one other thing to which I will advert—the question of the representation. You know, in 1830, there was almost no representation. There were a few towns in which there was almost universal suffrage, and many scores of rotten boroughs; in fact, the whole system was in such a state of congestion that it could not be tolerated any longer, and we had a small, but which might have been a very large revolution, in amending that state of things. Last year you, who had seen this hobgoblin for years, who had thought, I have no doubt, many of you, that I was very unwise and very rash in the mode in which I had proposed to extend the suffrage; last year you found out that it was not so monstrous a thing after all, and you became almost enthusiastic in support of the right hon. Gentleman's Reform Bill. Well, you believe now, and the First Minister, if this was an occasion on which he had to speak about it, would tell you not to be afraid of what was done,—he would tell you that, based on the suffrage of a larger portion of your countrymen, Parliament will henceforth be more strong and more venerated by the people than ever it has been before.

If that is true of Parliament, what shall we say of the Throne itself after all these changes? I will venture to ask, whatever of convenience there may be in hereditary monarchy, whatever of historic grandeur in the kingly office, whatever of nobleness in the possessor of the Crown, in all these things is it not true that everything is at least as fully recognised by the nation as it ever was at any previous period? I do not mention these things to reproach anybody here. We all have to learn. There are many in this House who have been in process of learning for a good while.

RUSSIA.

I.

WAR WITH RUSSIA—THE QUEEN'S MESSAGE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 31, 1854.

From Hansard.

[Mr. Bright was opposed to the war with Russia. This speech was spoken on the day when the message from the Crown announcing the declaration of war was brought down to the House.]

THERE are two reasons which may induce a Member of this House to address it—he may hope to convince some of those to whom he speaks, or he may wish to clear himself from any participation in a course which he believes to be evil. I presume I am one of that small section of the House to whom the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken (Mr. Layard) has referred, when he alluded to the small party who objected to the policy by which this country has arrived 'at the 'triumphant position which it now occupies.' In coming forward to speak on this occasion, I may be told that I am like a physician proposing to prescribe to-day for a man who died yesterday, and that it is of no use to insist upon views which the Government and the House have already determined to reject. I feel, however, that we are entering upon a policy which may affect the fortunes of this country for a long time to come, and I am unwilling to lose this opportunity of explaining wherein I differ from the course which the Government has pursued, and of clearing myself from any portion of the responsibility which attaches to those who support the policy which the Government has adopted.

We are asked to give our confidence to the Administration in voting the Address to the Crown, which has been moved by the noble Lord the Member for London, and to pledge our support to them in the war in which the country is now to engage. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli), on a recent occasion, made use of a term which differed considerably from what he said in a former debate; he spoke of this war as a 'just and unnecessary war.' I shall not discuss the justice of the war. It may be difficult to decide a point like this, seeing that every war undertaken since the days of Nimrod has been declared to be just by those in favour of it; but I may at least question whether any war that is

unnecessary can be deemed to be just. I shall not discuss this question on the abstract principle of peace at any price, as it is termed, which is held by a small minority of persons in this country, founded on religious opinions which are not generally received, but I shall discuss it entirely on principles which are accepted by all the Members of this House. I shall maintain that when we are deliberating on the question of war, and endeavouring to prove its justice or necessity, it becomes us to show that the interests of the country are clearly involved; that the objects for which the war is undertaken are probable, or, at least, possible of attainment; and, further, that the end proposed to be accomplished is worth the cost and the sacrifices which we are about to incur. I think these are fair principles on which to discuss the question, and I hope that when the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (Lord Palmerston) rises during this debate, he will not assume that I have dealt with it on any other principles than these.

The House should bear in mind that at this moment we are in intimate alliance with a neighbouring Government, which was, at a recent period, the originator of the troubles which have arisen at Constantinople. I do not wish to blame the French Government, because nothing could have been more proper than the manner in which it has retired from the difficulty it had created; but it is nevertheless quite true that France, having made certain demands upon Turkey with regard to concessions to the Latin Church, backed by a threat of the appearance of a French fleet in the Dardanelles, which demands Turkey had wholly or partially complied with; Russia, the powerful neighbour of Turkey, being on the watch, made certain other demands, having reference to the Greek Church; and Russia at the same time required (and this I understand to be the real ground of the quarrel) that Turkey should define by treaty, or convention, or by a simple note, or memorandum, what was conceded, and what were the rights of Russia, in order that the Government of Russia might not suffer in future from the varying policy and the vacillation of the Ottoman Government.

Now, it seems to me quite impossible to discuss this question without considering the actual condition of Turkey. The hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Layard) assumes that they who do not agree in the policy he advocates are necessarily hostile to the Turks, and have no sympathy for Turkey. I repudiate such an assumption altogether. I can feel for a country like that, if it be insulted or oppressed by a powerful neighbour; but all that sympathy may exist without my being able to convince myself that it is the duty of this country to enter into the serious obligation of a war in defence of the rights of that country. The noble Lord the Member for Tiverton is one of the very few men in this House, or out of it, who are bold enough to insist upon it that there is a growing strength in the Turkish Empire. There was a Gentleman in this House, sixty years ago, who, in the debates in 1791, expressed the singular opinion which the noble Lord now holds. There was a Mr. Stanley in the House at that period, who insisted on the growing power of Turkey, and asserted that the Turks of that day 'were more and more imitating our manners, and emerging from their inactivity and indolence; that improvements of every kind were being introduced among them, and that even printing-presses had been lately established in their capital.' That was the opinion of a Gentleman anxious to defend Turkey, and speaking in this House more than sixty years ago; we are now living sixty years later, and no one now, but the noble Lord, seems to insist upon the fact of the great and growing power of the Turkish Empire.

If any one thing is more apparent than another, on the face of all the documents furnished to the House by the Government of which the noble Lord is a Member, it is this, that the Turkish Empire is falling, or has fallen,

into a state of decay, and into anarchy so permanent as to have assumed a chronic character. The noble Lord surely has not forgotten that Turkey has lost the Crimea and Bessarabia, and its control over the Danubian Principalities; that the Kingdom of Greece has been carved out of it; that it has lost its authority over Algiers, and has run great risk of being conquered by its own vassal the Pasha of Egypt; and from this he might have drawn the conclusion that the empire was gradually falling into decay, and that to pledge ourselves to effect its recovery and sustentation, is to undertake what no human power will be able to accomplish. I only ask the House to turn to the statements which will be found nearly at the end of the first of the Blue Books recently placed on the table of the House, and they will find that there is scarcely any calamity which can be described as afflicting any country, which is not there proved to be present, and actively at work, in almost every province of the Turkish Empire. And the House should bear in mind, when reading these despatches from the English Consuls in Turkey to the English Ambassador at Constantinople, that they give a very faint picture of what really exists, because what are submitted to us are but extracts of more extended and important communications. It may fairly be assumed that the parts which are not published are those which described the state of things to be so bad, that the Government has been unwilling to lay before the House, and the country, and the world, that which would be so offensive and so injurious to its ally the Sultan of Turkey.

But, if other evidence be wanting, is it not a fact that Constantinople is the seat of intrigues and factions to a degree not known in any other country or capital in the world? France demands one thing, Russia another, England a third, and Austria something else. For many years past our Ambassador at Constantinople has been partly carrying on the government of that country, and influencing its policy, and it is the city in which are fought the diplomatic contests of the Great Powers of Europe. And if I have accurately described the state of Turkey, what is the position of Russia? It is a powerful country, under a strong Executive Government; it is adjacent to a weak and falling nation; it has in its history the evidences of a succession of triumphs over Turkey; it has religious affinities with a majority of the population of European Turkey which make it absolutely impossible that its Government should not, more or less, interfere, or have a strong interest, in the internal policy of the Ottoman Empire. Now, if we were Russian—and I put the case to the Members of this House—is it not likely, according to all the theories I have heard explained when we have been concerned in similar cases, that a large majority of the House and the country would be strongly in favour of such intervention as Russia has attempted? and if I opposed it, as I certainly should oppose it, I should be in a minority on that question more insignificant than that in which I have now the misfortune to find myself with regard to the policy of the Government on the grave question now before us.

The noble Lord the Member for London has made a statement of the case of the Government, and in favour of this Address to the Crown; but I thought it was a statement remarkably feeble in fact and in argument, if intended as a justification of the course he and his Colleagues have taken. For the purposes of the noble Lord's defence, the Russian demand upon Turkey is assumed to be something of far greater importance than I have been able to discover it to be from a careful examination of the terms in which it was couched. The noble Lord himself, in one of his despatches, admits that Russia had reason to complain, and that she has certain rights and duties by treaty, and by tradition, with regard to the protection of the Christians in Turkey. Russia asserted these rights, and wished to have them defined in a particular

form; and it was on the question of the form of the demand, and the manner in which it should be conceded, that the whole of this unfortunate difference has arisen. Now, if Russia made certain demands on Turkey, this country insisted that Turkey should not consent to them; for although the noble Lord has attempted to show that Turkey herself, acting for herself, had resolved to resist, I defy any one to read the despatches of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe without coming to the conclusion that, from the beginning to the end of the negotiations, the English Ambassador had insisted, in the strongest manner, that Turkey should refuse to make the slightest concession on the real point at issue in the demands of the Russian Government. As a proof of that statement, I may refer to the account given by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, in his despatch of the 5th of May, 1853, of the private interview he had with the Sultan, the Minister of the Sultan having left him at the door, that the interview might be strictly private. In describing that interview, Lord Stratford says, 'I then endeavoured to give him a just idea f the degree of danger to which his :mpire was exposed.' The Sultan was ot sufficiently aware of his danger, and he English Ambassador 'endeavoured o give him a just idea of it;' and it s by means such as this that he urged on the Turkish Government the necesy of resistance to any of the demands Russia, promising the armed assistce of England, whatever consequences ght ensue. From the moment that mise was made, or from the moment was sanctioned by the Cabinet at me, war was all but inevitable; they l entered into a partnership with the rkish Government (which, indeed, ld scarcely be called a Government all), to assist it by military force; l Turkey, having old quarrels to tle with Russia, and old wrongs to nge, was not slow to plunge into the r, having secured the co-operation of o powerful nations, England and rance, in her quarrel.

Now, I have no special sympathy with Russia, and I refuse to discuss or to decide this question on grounds of sympathy with Russia or with Turkey; I consider it simply as it affects the duties and the interests of my own country. I find that after the first proposition for a treaty had been made by Prince Menchikoff, that envoy made some concession, and asked only for a *Sened*, or Convention; and when that was disapproved of, he offered to accept a note, or memorandum merely, that should specify what should be agreed upon. But the Turk was advised to resist, first the treaty, then the convention, and then the note or memorandum; and an armed force was promised on behalf of this country. At the same time he knew that he would incur the high displeasure of England and France, and especially of England, if he made the slightest concession to Russia. It was about the middle of May that Prince Menchikoff left Constantinople, not having succeeded in obtaining any concession from the Porte; and it was on the 3rd of July that the Russian forces crossed the Pruth; thinking, I believe, by making a dash at the Principalities, to coerce Turkey, and deter her allies from rendering her the promised support. It has been assumed by some, that if England had declared war last year, Russia would have been deterred from any further step, and that the whole matter would have been settled at once. I, however, have no belief that Russia on the one hand, or England and France on the other, would have been bullied into any change of policy by means of that kind.

I come now to the celebrated 'Vienna note.' I am bound here to say that nobody has yet been able clearly to explain the difference between the various notes Turkey has been advised to reject, and this and other notes she has been urged to accept. With respect to this particular note, nobody seems to have understood it. There were four Ambassadors at Vienna, representing England, France, Austria, and Prussia; and these four

gentlemen drew up the Vienna note, and recommended it to the Porte as one which she might accept without injury to her independence or her honour. Louis Napoleon is a man knowing the use of language, and able to comprehend the meaning of a document of this nature, and his Minister of Foreign Affairs is a man of eminent ability; and Louis Napoleon and his Minister agree with the Ambassadors at Vienna as to the character of the Vienna note. We have a Cabinet composed of men of great individual capacity; a Cabinet, too, including no less than five Gentlemen who have filled the office of Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and who may, therefore, be presumed to understand even the sometimes concealed meaning of diplomatic phraseology. These five Foreign Secretaries, backed by the whole Cabinet, concurred with the Ambassadors at Vienna, and with the Emperor of the French and his Foreign Secretary, in recommending the Vienna note to the Sultan as a document which he might accept consistently with his honour, and with that integrity and that independence which our Government is so anxious to secure for him. What was done with this note? Passing by the marvellous stupidity, or something worse, which caused that note not to be submitted to Turkey before it was sent to St. Petersburg, he would merely state that it was sent to St. Petersburg, and was accepted in its integrity by the Emperor of Russia in the most frank and unreserved manner. We were then told—I was told by Members of the Government—that the moment the note was accepted by Russia we might consider the affair to be settled, and that the dispute would never be heard of again. When, however, the note was sent to Constantinople, after its acceptance by Russia, Turkey discovered, or thought, or said she discovered, that it was as bad as the original or modified proposition of Prince Menchikoff, and she refused the note as it was, and proposed certain modifications. And what are we to think of these arbitrators or mediators—the four Ambassadors a Vienna, and the Governments of Franc and England—who, after discussing th matter in three different cities, and a three distinct and different periods, an after agreeing that the proposition wa one which Turkey could assent to without detriment to her honour and independence, immediately afterwards turne round, and declared that the note wa one which Turkey could not be asked t accede to, and repudiated in the mos formal and express manner that whic they themselves had drawn up, an which, only a few days before, they ha approved of as a combination of wisdom and diplomatic dexterity which ha never been excelled?

But it was said that the interpretatio which Count Nesselrode placed upo this note made it impossible for Turke to accede to it. I very much doub whether Count Nesselrode placed an meaning upon it which it did not fairl warrant, and it is impossible to sa whether he really differed at all fron the actual intentions of the four Ambassadors at Vienna. But I can easil understand the course taken by th Russian Minister. It was this:—seein the note was rejected by the Turk, an considering that its previous acceptanc by Russia was some concession fron the original demand, he issued a circular, giving such an explanation o interpretation of the Vienna note a might enable him to get back to hi original position, and might save Russi from being committed and damaged b the concession, which, for the sake o peace, she had made. This circula however, could make no real differenc in the note itself; and notwithstandin this circular, whatever the note reall meant, it would have been just as binding upon Russia as any other note wil be that may be drawn up and agreed t at the end of the war. Although, however, this note was considered inadmissible, negotiations were continued; an at the Conference at Olmutz, at whic the Earl of Westmoreland was present the Emperor of Russia himself ex

ressed his willingness to accept the Vienna note—not in the sense that Count Nesselrode had placed upon it, but in that which the Ambassadors at Vienna declared to be its real meaning, and with such a clause as they should attach to it, defining its real meaning.

It is impossible from this fairly to doubt the sincerity of the desire for peace manifested by the Emperor of Russia. He would accept the note prepared by the Conference at Vienna, sanctioned by the Cabinets in London and Paris, and according to the interpretation put upon it by those by whom it had been prepared—such interpretation to be defined in a clause, to be by them attached to the original note. But in the precise week in which these negotiations were proceeding apparently to a favourable conclusion, the Turkish Council, consisting of a large number of dignitaries of the Turkish Empire—not one of whom, however, represented the Christian majority of the population of Turkey, but inspired by the fanaticism and desperation of the old Mahomedan party—assembled; and, fearful that peace would be established, and that they would lose the great opportunity of dragging England and France into a war with their ancient enemy the Emperor of Russia, they came to a sudden resolution in favour of war; and in the very week in which Russia agreed to the Vienna note in the sense of the Vienna Conference, the Turks declared war against Russia,—the Turkish forces crossed the Danube, and began the war, involving England in an inglorious and costly struggle, from which this Government and a succeeding Government may fail to extricate us.

I differ very much from those Gentlemen who condemn the Government for the tardy nature of their proceedings. I never said or thought that the Government was not honestly anxious for peace; but I believe, and indeed I know, that at an early period they committed themselves and the country to a policy which left the issue of peace or war in other hands than their own—namely, in the hands of the Turks, the very last hands in which I am willing to trust the interests and the future of this country. In my opinion, the original blunder was committed when the Turks were advised to resist and not to concede; and the second blunder was made when the Turks were supported in their rejection of the Vienna note; for the moment the four Powers admitted that their recommendation was not necessarily to be accepted by the Porte, they put themselves entirely into the hands of the Turk, and might be dragged into any depth of confusion and war in which that respectable individual might wish to involve them.

The course taken by Turkey in beginning the war was against the strong advice of her allies; but, notwithstanding this, the moment the step was taken, they turned round again, as in the case of the Vienna note, and justified and defended her in the course she had adopted, in defiance of the remonstrances they had urged against it. In his speech to-night, the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) has occupied some time in showing that Turkey was fully justified in declaring war. I should say nothing against that view, if Turkey were fighting on her own resources; but I *maintain that, if she is in alliance* with England and France, the opinions of those Powers should at least have been heard, and that, in case of her refusal to listen to their counsel, they would have been justified in saying to her, 'If you persist in taking your own course, we cannot be involved in the difficulties to which it may give rise, but must leave you to take the consequences of your own acts.' But this was not said, and the result is, that we are dragged into a war by the madness of the Turk, which, but for the fatal blunders we have committed, we might have avoided.

There have been three plans for dealing with this Turkish question, advocated by as many parties in this country. The first finds favour with two or three Gentlemen who usually sit on the

bench below me—with a considerable number out of doors—and with a portion of the public press. These persons were anxious to have gone to war during last summer. They seem actuated by a frantic and bitter hostility to Russia, and, without considering the calamities in which they might involve this country, they have sought to urge it into a great war, as they imagined, on behalf of European freedom, and in order to cripple the resources of Russia. I need hardly say that I have not a particle of sympathy with that party, or with that policy. I think nothing can be more unwise than that party, and nothing more atrocious than their policy. But there was another course recommended, and which the Government has followed. War delayed, but still certain—arrangements made which placed the issue of war in other hands than in those of the Government of this country—that is the policy which the Government has pursued, and in my opinion it is fatal to Turkey, and disastrous to England. There is a third course, and which I should have, and indeed have all along recommended—that war should have been avoided by the acceptance on the part of Turkey either of the last note of Prince Menchikoff, or of the Vienna note; or, if Turkey would not consent to either, that then she should have been allowed to enter into the war alone, and England and France—supposing they had taken, and continued to take, the same view of the interests of Western Europe which they have hitherto taken—might have stood aloof until the time when there appeared some evident danger of the war being settled on terms destructive of the balance of power; and then they might have come in, and have insisted on a different settlement. I would either have allowed or compelled Turkey to yield, or would have insisted on her carrying on the war alone.

The question is, whether the advantages both to Turkey and England of avoiding war altogether, would have been less than those which are likely to arise from the policy which the Government has pursued? Now, if the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton is right in saying that Turkey is a growing Power, and that she has elements of strength which unlearned persons like myself know nothing about; surely no immediate, or sensible, or permanent mischief could have arisen to her from the acceptance of the Vienna note, which all the distinguished persons who agreed to it have declared to be perfectly consistent with her honour and independence. If she has been growing stronger and stronger of late years, surely she would have grown still stronger in the future, and there might have been a reasonable expectation that, whatever disadvantages she might have suffered for a time from that note, her growing strength would have enabled her to overcome them, while the peace of Europe might have been preserved. But suppose that Turkey is not a growing Power, but that the Ottoman rule in Europe is tottering to its fall, I come to the conclusion that, whatever advantages were afforded to the Christian population of Turkey would have enabled them to grow more rapidly in numbers, in industry, in wealth, in intelligence, and in political power; and that, as they thus increased in influence, they would have become more able, in case any accident, which might not be far distant, occurred, to supplant the Mahomedan rule, and to establish themselves in Constantinople as a Christian State, which, I think, every man who hears me will admit is infinitely more to be desired than that the Mahomedan power should be permanently sustained by the bayonets of France and the fleets of England. Europe would thus have been at peace; for I do not think even the most bitter enemies of Russia believe that the Emperor of Russia intended last year, if the Vienna note or Prince Menchikoff's last and most moderate proposition had been accepted, to have marched on Constantinople. Indeed, he had pledged himself in the most

distinct manner to withdraw his troops at once from the Principalities, if the Vienna note were accepted; and therefore in that case Turkey would have been delivered from the presence of the foe; peace would for a time have been secured to Europe; and the whole matter would have drifted on to its natural solution — which is, that the Mahomedan power in Europe should eventually succumb to the growing power of the Christian population of the Turkish territories.

The noble Lord the Member for London, and his colleague the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton, when they speak of the aggrandisement of Russia relatively to the rest of Europe, always speak of the 'balance of power,' a term which it is not easy to define. It is a hackneyed term - a phrase to which it is difficult to attach any definite meaning. I wish the noble Lord would explain what is meant by the balance of power. In 1791, the whole Whig party repudiated the proposition that Turkey had anything to do with the balance of power. Mr. Burke, in 1791, when speaking on that subject, used the following language:—

'He had never heard it said before, that the Turkish Empire was ever considered as any part of the balance of power in Europe. They had nothing to do with European policy; they considered themselves as wholly Asiatic. What had these worse than savages to do with the Powers of Europe, but to spread war, destruction, and pestilence among them? The Ministry and the policy which would give these people any weight in Europe, would deserve all the bans and curses of posterity. All that was holy in religion, all that was moral and humane, demanded an abhorrence of everything which tended to extend the power of that cruel and wasteful Empire. Any Christian Power was to be preferred to these destructive savages.'

Mr. Whitbread, on the same occasion, said:—

'Suppose the Empress at Constantinople, and the Turks expelled from the European provinces, would any unprejudiced man contend that by such an event mankind would not be largely benefited? Would any man contend that the expulsion of a race of beings whose abominable tyranny proscribed the arts, and literature, and everything that was good, and great, and amiable, would not conduce to the prosperity and happiness of the world? He was convinced it would. This was an event with which the paltry consideration of the nice adjustment of the balance in Europe was not to be put in competition, although he was a friend to that balance on broad and liberal principles. He abhorred the wretched policy which could entertain a wish that the most luxuriant part of the earth should remain desolate and miserable that a particular system might be maintained.'

And Mr. Fox, when speaking of Mr. Pitt's system, said—and be it remembered that nobody is so great an authority with the noble Lord the Member for London as Mr. Fox, whose words I am now about to quote:—

'His (Mr. Pitt's) defensive system was wicked and absurd—that every country which appeared, from whatever cause, to be growing great, should be attacked; that all the Powers of Europe should be confined to the same precise situation in which this defensive system found them. . . Her (Russia's) extent of territory, scanty revenue, and thin population made her power by no means formidable to us—a Power whom we could neither attack nor be attacked by; and this was the Power against which we were going to war. Overturning the Ottoman Empire he conceived to be an argument of no weight. The event was not probable; and if it should happen, it was more likely to be of advantage than injurious to us.'

It will probably be said, that these were opinions held by Gentlemen who sat on that side of the House, and who were ready to advocate any course that might serve to damage the Ministers of the day. I should be sorry to think so, especially of a man whose public

character is so much to be admired as that of Mr. Fox; but I will come to a much later period, and produce authority of a very similar kind. Many hon. Members now in the House recollect the late Lord Holland, and they all know his sagacity and what his authority was with the party with which he was connected. What did he say? Why, so late as the year 1828, when this question was mooted in the House of Lords, he said:—

'No, my Lords, I hope I shall never see—God forbid I ever should see—for the proposition would be scouted from one end of England to another—any preparations or any attempt to defend this our "ancient ally" from the attacks of its enemies. There was no arrangement made in that treaty for preserving the crumbling and hateful, or, as Mr. Burke called it, that wasteful and disgusting Empire of the Turks, from dismemberment and destruction; and none of the Powers who were parties to that treaty will ever, I hope, save the falling Empire of Turkey from ruin.'

I hope it will not be supposed that I am animated by any hostility to Turkey, in quoting sentiments and language such as this, for I have as much sympathy with what is just towards that country as any other man can have; but the question is, not what is just to Turkey, but what is just to this country, and what this House, as the depositary of the power of this country, has a right to do with regard to this most dangerous question. I am, therefore, at liberty to quote from the statesmen of 1791 and 1828, the political fathers and authorities of the noble Lord the Member for London, and to say, that if I hold opinions different from those held by the Government, I am, at least, not singular in those opinions, for I can quote great names and high authorities in support of the course I am taking.

This 'balance of power' is in reality the hinge on which the whole question turns. But if that is so important as to be worth a sanguinary war, why did you not go to war with France when she seized upon Algiers? That was a portion of Turkey not quite so distinct, it is true, as are the Danubian Principalities; but still Turkey had sovereign rights over Algiers. When, therefore, France seized on a large portion of the northern coast of Africa, might it not have been said that such an act tended to convert the Mediterranean into a French lake, —that Algiers lay next to Tunis, and that, having conquered Tunis, there would remain only Tripoli between France and Alexandria, and that the 'balance of power' was being destroyed by the aggrandisement of France? All this might have been said, and the Government might easily have plunged the country into war on that question. But happily the Government of that day had the good sense not to resist, and the result had not been disadvantageous to Europe; this country had not suffered from the seizure of Algiers, and England and France had continued at peace.

Take another case—the case of the United States. The United States waged war with Mexico—a war with a weaker State—in my opinion, an unjust and unnecessary war. If I had been a citizen of the American Republic, I should have condemned that war; but might it not have been as justly argued that, if we allowed the aggressive attacks of the United States upon Mexico, her insatiable appetite would soon be turned towards the north—towards the dependencies of this Empire—and that the magnificent colonies of the Canadas would soon fall a prey to the assaults of their rapacious neighbour? But such arguments were not used, and it was not thought necessary to involve this country in a war for the support of Mexico, although the Power that was attacking that country lay adjacent to our own dominions.

If this phrase of the 'balance of power' is to be always an argument for war, the pretence for war will never be wanting, and peace can never be secure. Let any one compare the power of this

country with that of Austria now, and forty years ago. Will any one say that England, compared with Austria, is now three times as powerful as she was thirty or forty years ago? Austria has a divided people, bankrupt finances, and her credit is so low that she cannot borrow a shilling out of her own territories; England has a united people, national wealth rapidly increasing, and a mechanical and productive power to which that of Austria is as nothing. Might not Austria complain that we have disturbed the 'balance of power' because we are growing so much stronger from better government, from the greater union of our people, from the wealth that is created by the hard labour and skill of our population, and from the wonderful development of the mechanical resources of the kingdom, which is seen on every side? If this phrase of the 'balance of power,' the meaning of which nobody can exactly make out, is to be brought in on every occasion to stimulate this country to war, there is an end to all hope of permanent peace.

There is, indeed, a question of a 'balance of power' which this country might regard, if our statesmen had a little less of those narrow views which they sometimes arrogantly impute to me and to those who think with me. If they could get beyond those old notions which belong to the traditions of Europe, and cast their eyes as far westward as they are now looking eastward, they might there see a power growing up in its gigantic proportions, which will teach us before very long where the true 'balance of power' is to be found. This struggle may indeed begin with Russia, but it may end with half the States of Europe; for Austria and Prussia are just as likely to join with Russia as with England and France, and probably much more so; and we know not how long alliances which now appear very secure, may remain so; for the circumstances in which the Government has involved us are of the most critical character, and we stand upon a mine which may explode any day. Give us seven years of this infatuated struggle upon which we are now entering, and let the United States remain at peace during that period, and who shall say what will then be the relative positions of the two nations? Have you read the Reports of your own Commissioners to the New York Exhibition? Do you comprehend what is the progress of that country, as exhibited in its tonnage, and exports, and imports, and manufactures, and in the development of all its resources, and the means of transit? There has been nothing like it hitherto under the sun. The United States may profit to a large extent by the calamities which will befall us; whilst we, under the miserable and lunatic idea that we are about to set the worn out Turkish Empire on its legs, and permanently to sustain it against the aggressions of Russia, are entangled in a war. Our trade will decay and diminish—our people, suffering and discontented, as in all former periods of war, will emigrate in increasing numbers to a country whose wise policy is to keep itself free from the entanglement of European politics—to a country with which rests the great question, whether England shall, for any long time, retain that which she professes to value so highly—her great superiority in industry and at sea.

This whole notion of the 'balance of power' is a mischievous delusion which has come down to us from past times; we ought to drive it from our minds, and to consider the solemn question of peace or war on more clear, more definite, and on far higher principles than any that are involved in the phrase the 'balance of power.' What is it the Government propose to do? Let us examine their policy as described in the message from the Crown, and in the Address which has been moved to-night. As I understand it, we are asked to go to war to maintain the 'integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire'—to curb the aggressive power of Russia—and to defend the interests of this country.

These are the three great objects to which the efforts and resources of this country are to be directed. The noble Lord the Member for London is, I think, the author of the phrase 'the integrity and independence' of Turkey. If I am not mistaken, he pledged himself to this more than a year ago, when he was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a letter to somebody at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in answer to an Address from certain enthusiasts in that town, who exhorted the Government to step in for the support of the Ottoman Empire. But what is the condition of that Empire at this moment? I have already described to the House what it would have been if my policy had been adopted —if the thrice-modified note of Prince Menchikoff had been accepted, or if the Vienna note had been assented to by the Porte. But what is it now under the protection of the noble Lord and his Colleagues? At the present moment there are no less than three foreign armies on Turkish soil: there are 100,000 Russian troops in Bulgaria; there are armies from England and France approaching the Dardanelles, to entrench themselves on Turkish territory, and to return nobody knows when. All this can hardly contribute to the 'independence' of any country. But more than this: there are insurrections springing up in almost every Turkish province, and insurrections which must, from the nature of the Turkish Government, widely extend; and it is impossible to describe the anarchy which must prevail, inasmuch as the control heretofore exercised by the Government to keep the peace is now gone, by the withdrawal of its troops to the banks of the Danube; and the licence and demoralization engendered by ages of bad government will be altogether unchecked. In addition to these complicated horrors, there are 200,000 men under arms; the state of their finances is already past recovery; and the allies of Turkey are making demands upon her far beyond anything that was required by Russia herself. Can anything be more destructive of the 'integrity and independence' of Turkey than the policy of the noble Lord?

I have seen only this day a letter in the *Times* from its Correspondent at Constantinople, which states that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe and one of the Pashas of the Porte had spent a whole night in the attempt to arrange concessions which her allies had required on behalf of the Christian population of Turkey. The Christians are to be allowed to hold landed property; the capitation tax is to be abolished—for they are actually contending for the abolition of that which the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Layard) says is a positive benefit to those upon whom it is imposed; and the evidence of Christians is to be admitted into courts of justice. But the *Times*' Correspondent asks, what is the use of a decree at Constantinople, which will have no effect in the provinces?—for the judges are Turks of the old school, and they will have little sympathy with a change under which a Christian in a court of justice is made equal with his master the Turk. This Correspondent describes what Turkey really wants—not three foreign armies on her soil, nor any other thing which our Government is about to give her, but 'a pure executive, a better financial administration, and sensible laws;' and it must be admitted that the true wants of the country are not likely soon to be supplied.

Now, so far as regards Turkey herself, and the 'integrity and independence' of that Empire, I put it seriously to the House—do you believe, that if the Government and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe had advised Turkey to accept the last note of Prince Menchikoff, a note so little different from the others, offered before and since, that it was impossible to discover in what the distinction consisted; or if the Government had insisted on Turkey accepting, as the condition of their co-operation, the Vienna note, either as at first proposed

by the Conference, or with the explanatory definitions with which the Emperor of Russia at Olmutz offered to accept it, that they would have injured the 'integrity and independence' of Turkey? Nay, I will not insult you by asking whether, under such circumstances, that 'integrity and independence' would not have been a thousand times more secure than it is at this hour? If that be true, then the 'balance of power' theory has been entirely overthrown by the policy of the Government, for no one will argue that Turkey will come out of her present difficulties more able to cope with the power of Russia than she was before. With her finances hopelessly exhausted, will she ever again be able to raise an army of 200,000 men? But there are men, and I suspect there are statesmen, in this country, and men in office, too, who believe that Turkey will not be Turkey at the end of this war—that she cannot come out of it an Ottoman Power—that such a convulsion has been created, that while we are ready to contend with half the world to support the 'integrity and independence' of the Ottoman Empire, there will shortly be no Ottoman Empire to take the benefit of the enormous sacrifices we are about to make.

But we are undertaking to repress and to curb Russian aggression. These are catching words; they have been amplified in newspapers, and have passed from mouth to mouth, and have served to blind the eyes of multitudes wholly ignorant of the details of this question. If Turkey has been in danger from the side of Russia heretofore, will she not be in far greater danger when the war is over? Russia is always there. You do not propose to dismember Russia, or to blot out her name from the map, and her history from the records of Europe. Russia will be always there—always powerful, always watchful, and actuated by the same motives of ambition, either of influence or of territory, which are supposed to have moved her in past times. What, then, do you propose to do? and how is Turkey to be secured? Will you make a treaty with Russia, and force conditions upon her? But if so, what security have you that one treaty will be more binding than another? It is easy to find or make a reason for breaking a treaty, when it is the interest of a country to break it.

I recollect reading a statement made by the illustrious Washington, when it was proposed to land a French army in North America, to assist the colonies in overthrowing the yoke of this country. Washington was afraid of them—he did not know whether these allies once landed might not be as difficult to get rid of as the English troops he was endeavouring to expel; for, said he, 'whatever may be the convention entered into, my experience teaches me that nations and Governments rarely abide by conventions or treaties longer than it is their interest to do so.' So you may make a treaty with Russia; but if Russia is still powerful and ambitious—as she certainly will be—and if Turkey is exhausted and enfeebled by the war—as she certainly will be—then I want to know what guarantee you have, the moment the resources of Russia have recovered from the utmost degree of humiliation and exhaustion to which you may succeed in reducing her, that she will not again insist on terms with Turkey infinitely more perilous than those who have ruined Turkey by urging her to refuse? It is a delusion to suppose you can dismember Russia—that you can blot her from the map of Europe—that you can take guarantees from her, as some seem to imagine, as easily as you take bail from an offender, who would otherwise go to prison for three months. England and France cannot do this with a stroke of the pen, and the sword will equally fail if the attempt be made.

But I come now to another point. How are the interests of England involved in this question? This is, after all, the great matter which we, the representatives of the people of England, have to consider. It is not a question

of sympathy with any other State. I have sympathy with Turkey; I have sympathy with the serfs of Russia; I have sympathy with the people of Hungary, whose envoy the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton refused to see, and the overthrow of whose struggle for freedom by the armies of Russia he needlessly justified in this House; I have sympathy with the Italians, subjects of Austria, Naples, and the Pope; I have sympathy with the three millions of slaves in the United States; but it is not on a question of sympathy that I dare involve this country, or any country, in a war which must cost an incalculable amount of treasure and of blood. It is not my duty to make this country the knight-errant of the human race, and to take upon herself the protection of the thousand millions of human beings who have been permitted by the Creator of all things to people this planet.

I hope no one will assume that I would invite—that is the phrase which has been used—the aggressions of Russia. If I were a Russian, speaking in a Russian Parliament, I should denounce any aggression upon Turkey, as I now blame the policy of our own Government; and I greatly fear I should find myself in a minority, as I now find myself in a minority on this question. But it has never yet been explained how the interests of this country are involved in the present dispute. We are not going to fight for tariffs, or for markets for our exports. In 1791, Mr. Grey argued that, as our imports from Russia exceeded 1,000,000*l.* sterling, it was not desirable that we should go to war with a country trading with us to that amount. In 1853, Russia exported to this country at least 14,000,000*l.* sterling, and that fact affords no proof of the increasing barbarism of Russia, or of any disregard of her own interests as respects the development of her resources. What has passed in this House since the opening of the present Session? We had a large surplus revenue, and our Chancellor of the Exchequer is an ambitious Chancellor. I have no hope in any statesman who has no ambition; he can have no great object before him, and his career will be unmarked by any distinguished services to his country.

When the Chancellor of the Exchequer entered office, doubtless he hoped, by great services to his country, to build up a reputation such as a man may labour for and live for. Every man in this House, even those most opposed to him acknowledged the remarkable capacity which he displayed during the last session, and the country has set its seal to this—that his financial measures, in the remission and readjustment of taxation, were worthy of the approbation of the great body of the people. The right hon. Gentleman has been blamed for his speech at Manchester, not for making the speech, but because it differed from the tone of the speech made by the noble Lord, his colleague in office, at Greenock. I observed that difference. There can be no doubt that there has been, and that there is now, a great difference of opinion in the Cabinet on this Eastern question. It could not be otherwise; and Government has gone on from one step to another; they have drifted—to use the happy expression of Lord Clarendon to describe what is so truly unhappy—they have drifted from a state of peace to a state of war; and to no Member of the Government could this state of things be more distressing than to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for it dashed from him the hopes he entertained that session after session, as trade extended and the public revenue increased, he would find himself the beneficent dispenser of blessings to the poor, and indeed to all classes of the people of this kingdom. Where is the surplus now? No man dare even ask for it, or for any portion of it.

Here is my right hon. Friend and Colleague, who is resolved on the abolition of the newspaper stamp. I can hardly imagine a more important question than that, if it be desirable for the people to be instructed in their social and political obligations; and yet my

right hon. Friend has scarcely the courage to ask for the abolition of that odious tax. I believe, indeed, that my right hon. Friend has a plan to submit to the Chancellor by which the abolition of the stamp may be accomplished without sacrifice to the Exchequer, but that I will not go into at present. But this year's surplus is gone, and next year's surplus is gone with it; and you have already passed a Bill to double the income-tax. And it is a mistake to suppose that you will obtain double the sum by simply doubling the tax. Many persons make an average of their incomes, and make a return accordingly. The average will not be sustained at the bidding of Parliament; and profits that were considerable last year, will henceforth show a great diminution, or will have vanished altogether. I mention this for the benefit of the country gentlemen, because it is plain that real property, lands and houses, must bear the burden of this war; for I will undertake to say, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will prefer to leave that bench, and will take his seat in some other quarter of the House, rather than retrace the steps which Sir Robert Peel took in 1842. He is not the promoter of this war; his speeches have shown that he is anxious for peace, and that he hoped to be a Minister who might dispense blessings by the remission of taxes to the people; and I do not believe the right hon. Gentleman will consent to be made the instrument to reimpose upon the country the Excise duties which have been repealed, or the Import duties which in past times inflicted such enormous injury upon trade. The property-tax is the lever, or the weapon, with which the proprietors of lands and houses in this kingdom will have to support the 'integrity and independence' of the Ottoman Empire. Gentlemen, I congratulate you, that every man of you has a Turk upon his shoulders.

The hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Layard) spoke of our 'triumphant position'—the position in which the Government has placed us by pledging this country to support the Turks. I see nothing like a triumph in the fact, that in addition to our many duties to our own country, we have accepted the defence of twenty millions or more of the people of Turkey, on whose behalf, but, I believe, not for their benefit, we are about to sacrifice the blood and treasure of England. But there are other penalties and other considerations. I will say little about the Reform Bill, because, as the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) is aware, I do not regard it as an unmixed blessing. But I think even hon. Gentlemen opposite will admit that it would be well if the representation of the people in this House were in a more satisfactory state, and that it is unfortunate that we are not permitted, calmly and with mutual good feeling, to consider the question, undisturbed by the thunder of artillery and undismayed by the disasters which are inseparable from a state of war.

With regard to trade, I can speak with some authority as to the state of things in Lancashire. The Russian trade is not only at an end, but it is made an offence against the law to deal with any of our customers in Russia. The German trade is most injuriously affected by the uncertainty which prevails on the continent of Europe. The Levant trade, a very important branch, is almost extinguished in the present state of affairs in Greece, Turkey in Europe, and Syria. All property in trade is diminishing in value, whilst its burdens are increasing. The funds have fallen in value to the amount of about 120,000,000*l*. sterling, and railway property is quoted at about 80,000,000*l*. less than was the case a year ago. I do not pretend to ask the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Layard) to put these losses, these great destructions of property, against the satisfaction he feels at the 'triumphant position' at which we have arrived. He may content himself with the dream that we are supporting the 'integrity and independence' of Turkey, though I doubt whether

bringing three foreign armies on her soil, raising insurrections in her provinces, and hopelessly exhausting her finances, is a *rational* mode of maintaining her as an independent Power.

But we are sending out 30 000 troops to Turkey, and in that number are not included the men serving on board the fleets. Here are 30,000 lives! There is a thrill of horror sometimes when a single life is lost, and we sigh at the loss of a friend, or of a casual acquaintance! But here we are in danger of losing — and I give the opinions of military men and not my own merely — 10,000, or it may be 20,000 lives, that may be sacrificed in this struggle. I have never pretended to any sympathy for the military profession — but I have sympathy for my fellow-men and fellow-countrymen, wherever they may be. I have heard very melancholy accounts of the scenes which have been witnessed in the separations from families occasioned by this expedition to the East. But it will be said, and probably the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton will say, that it is a just war, a glorious war, and that I am full of morbid sentimentality, and have introduced topics not worthy to be mentioned in Parliament. But these are matters affecting the happiness of the homes of England, and we, who are the representatives and guardians of those homes, when the grand question of war is before us, should know at least that we have a case — that success is probable — and that an object is attainable, which may be commensurate with the cost of war.

There is another point which gives me some anxiety. You are boasting of an alliance with France. Alliances are dangerous things. It is an alliance with Turkey that has drawn us into this war. I would not advise alliances with any nation, but I would cultivate friendship with all nations. I would have no alliance that might drag us into measures which it is neither our duty nor our interest to undertake. By our present alliance with Turkey, Turkey cannot make peace without the consent of England and France; and by this boasted alliance with France we may find ourselves involved in great difficulties at some future period of these transactions.

I have endeavoured to look at the whole of this question, and I declare, after studying the correspondence which has been laid on the table — knowing what I know of Russia and of Turkey — seeing what I see of Austria and of Prussia — feeling the enormous perils to which this country is now exposed, I am amazed at the course which the Government have pursued, and I am horrified at the results to which their policy must inevitably tend. I do not say this in any spirit of hostility to the Government. I have never been hostile to them. I have once or twice felt it my duty to speak, with some degree of sharpness, of particular Members of the Administration, but I suspect that in private they would admit that my censure was merited. But I have never entertained a party hostility to the Government. I know something of the difficulties they have had to encounter, and I have no doubt that, in taking office, they acted in as patriotic a spirit as is generally expected from Members of this House. So long as their course was one which I could support, or even excuse, they have had my support. But this is not an ordinary question; it is not a question of reforming the University of Oxford, or of abolishing 'ministers' money' in Ireland; the matter now before us affects the character, the policy, and the vital interests of the Empire; and when I think the Government have committed a grievous — it may be a fatal error — I am bound to tell them so.

I am told indeed that the war is popular, and that it is foolish and eccentric to oppose it. I doubt if the war is very popular in this House. But as to what is, or has been popular, I may ask, what was more popular than the American war? There were persons lately living in Manchester who had seen the recruiting party going through the prin-

cipal streets of that city, accompanied by the parochial clergy in full canonicals, exhorting the people to enlist to put down the rebels in the American colonies. Where is now the popularity of that disastrous and disgraceful war, and who is the man to defend it? But if hon. Members will turn to the correspondence between George III and Lord North on the subject of that war, they will find that the King's chief argument for continuing the war was, that it would be dishonourable in him to make peace so long as the war was popular with the people. Again, what war could be more popular than the French war? Has not the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) said, not long ago, in this House, that peace was rendered difficult if not impossible by the conduct of the English press in 1803? For myself, I do not trouble myself whether my conduct in Parliament is popular or not. I care only that it shall be wise and just as regards the permanent interests of my country, and I despise from the bottom of my heart the man who speaks a word in favour of this war, or of any war which he believes might have been avoided, merely because the press and a portion of the people urge the Government to enter into it.

I recollect a passage of a distinguished French writer and statesman which bears strongly upon our present position: he says,—

'The country which can comprehend and act upon the lessons which God has given it in the past events of its history, is secure in the most imminent crises of its fate.'

The past events of our history have taught me that the intervention of this country in European wars is not only unnecessary, but calamitous; that we have rarely come out of such intervention having succeeded in the objects we fought for; that a debt of 800,000,000*l*. sterling has been incurred by the policy which the noble Lord approves, apparently for no other reason than that it dates from the time of William III; and that, not debt alone has been incurred, but that we have left Europe at least as much in chains as before a single effort was made by us to rescue her from tyranny. I believe, if this country, seventy years ago, had adopted the principle of non-intervention in every case where her interests were not directly and obviously assailed, that she would have been saved from much of the pauperism and brutal crimes by which our Government and people have alike been disgraced. This country might have been a garden, every dwelling might have been of marble, and every person who treads its soil might have been sufficiently educated. We should indeed have had less of military glory. We might have had neither Trafalgar nor Waterloo; but we should have set the high example of a Christian nation, free in its institutions, courteous and just in its conduct towards all foreign States, and resting its policy on the unchangeable foundation of Christian morality.

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RUSSIA.

II.

ENLISTMENT OF FOREIGNERS BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, DECEMBER 22, 1854.

From Hansard.

At this hour of the night I shall not make a speech; but I wish to say a few things in answer to the noble Lord the Member for the City of London, who has very strangely misapprehended— I am not allowed to say 'misrepresented'—what fell from my hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding. The noble Lord began by saying that my hon. Friend had charged the Government with making war in something of a propagandist spirit in favour of nationalities throughout the Continent; but that was the exact contrary of what my hon. Friend did say. What he said was, that that portion of the people of this country who had clamoured for war, and whose opinion formed the basis whereupon the Government grounded their plea for the popularity of the war, were in favour of the setting up of nationalities; but my hon. Friend showed that the Government had no such object, and the war no such tendency. The next misrepresentation was, that my hon. Friend had spoken in favour of the *status quo;* but there is not the shadow of a shade of truth in that statement. What my hon. Friend said was precisely the contrary; but the noble Lord, arguing from his own misapprehension of my hon. Friend's meaning, went on then to show that it would not do to establish a peace on the *status quo* terms, thus knocking down a position which nobody had set up. The noble Lord was also guilty of another mistake with reference to an observation of my hon. Friend as to the character and position of the Turks. We have referred over and over again to a monstrous statement made by the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton as to the improvement of the Turks—a statement which is contradicted by all facts. To-night, with a disingenuousness which I should be ashamed to use in argument —[Cries of 'Oh!']—it is very well for hon. Gentlemen who come down to cheer a minister to cry 'Oh!' but is it a fact, or is it not? Is there a man who hears me who does not know perfectly well, when the noble Lord said that the Turks had improved within the last twenty years more than any other nation in Europe, that the statement referred not to the Christians, whose rights and interests we were defending, but to the character of the Mahometan population? But to-night, with a disingenuousness which I could not condescend to be guilty of, the noble Lord has assumed that the statement referred

to the condition of the Christian population.

The real question was, as every hon. Gentleman knows, What was the condition of the Mahometan? and there is not a Gentleman in this House who is not aware that the Mahometan portion of the population of the Turkish Empire is in a decaying and dying condition, and that the two great Empires which have undertaken to set it on its legs again will find it about the most difficult task in which they ever were engaged. What do your own officers say? Here is an extract from a letter which appeared in the papers the other day:—

'They ought to set these rascally Turks to mend them [the roads], which might easily be done, as under the clay there is plenty of capital stone. They are, I am sorry to say, bringing more of these brutes into the Crimea, which makes more mouths to feed, without being of any use.'

I have seen a private letter, too, from an able and distinguished officer in the Crimea, who says—

'Half of us do not know what we are fighting for, and the other half only pray that we may not be fighting for the Turks.'

The only sign of improvement which has been manifested that I know of is, that on a great emergency, when their Empire, under the advice of Her Majesty's Government, and that of their Ambassador, was placed in a situation of great peril, the Turks managed to make an expiring effort, and to get up an army which the Government, so far as I can hear, has since permitted to be almost destroyed.

Another sign of improvement is, perhaps, that they have begun to wear trowsers; but as to their commerce, their industry, or their revenue, nothing can be in a worse condition. You have now two Empires attempting to set the Turkish Empire up again; and it is said that a third great Empire is also about to engage in the task. The Turk wants to borrow money, but he cannot borrow it to-day in the London market at less than from eight to nine per cent. Russia, on the other hand, is an Empire against which three great Empires, if Turkey can be counted one still, are now combined, and it is said that a fourth great Empire will soon join the ranks of its enemies. But Russian funds at this moment are very little lower than the stock of the London and North-Western Railway. You have engaged to set this Turkish Empire up again—a task in which everybody knows you must fail—and you have persuaded the Turk to enter into a contest, one of the very first proceedings in which has forced him to mortgage to the English capitalist a very large portion—and the securest portion, too, of his revenues—namely, that which he derives from Egypt, amounting in fact, in a fiscal and financial point of view, to an actual dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, by a separation of Egypt from it. Why is it that the noble Lord has to-night come forward as the defender of the Greeks? Is it that he has discovered, when this war is over, that Turkey, which he has undertaken to protect, the Empire which he is to defend and sustain against the Emperor of Russia, will have been smothered under his affectionate embrace? or, to quote the powerful language of the *Times*, when the Vienna note was refused, that whatever else may be the result of the war in which Turkey has plunged Europe, this one thing is certain, that at its conclusion there may be no Turkish Empire to talk about?

The noble Lord quoted a letter which I wrote some time ago, and which, like others who have discussed it, he found it not easy to answer. In that letter I referred to Don Pacifico's case; and I am sure that the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton will remember a despatch which he received through Baron Brunnow, from Count Nesselrode, on that subject,—a despatch

which I think the House will forgive my reading to it on the present occasion, as it gives the Russian Government's estimation of that act of 'material guarantee' on the part of England:—

'It remains to be seen whether Great Britain, abusing the advantages which are afforded her by her immense maritime superiority, intends henceforth to pursue an isolated policy, without caring for those engagements which bind her to the other Cabinets; whether she intends to disengage herself from every obligation, as well as from all community of action, and to authorize all great Powers, on every fitting opportunity, to recognize to the weak no other rule but their own will, no other right but their own physical strength. Your Excellency will please to read this despatch to Lord Palmerston, and to give him a copy of it.'

If there had been no more temper—no more sense—no more unity in the negotiations which took place with regard to this matter, in all probability we might have had a war about it. It was a case in which Russia might have gone to war with this country, if she had been so minded. But Russia did not do that. Fortunately, the negotiations that ensued settled that question without bringing that disaster upon Europe. But the noble Lord again misinterpreted my hon. Friend (Mr. Cobden). I appeal to every Gentleman who heard my hon. Friend's speech whether the drift of it was not this—that in this quarrel, Prussia, and certainly Austria, had a nearer and stronger interest than England, and that he could not understand why the terms which Austria might consider fair and safe for herself and for Turkey, might not be accepted with honour by this country and by France? Now, I am prepared to show that, from the beginning of this dispute, there is not a single thing which Austria wished to do in the course of the negotiations, or even which France wished to do, that the Government of the noble Lord did not systematically refuse its assent to, and that the noble Lord's Government is alone responsible for the failure in every particular point which took place in these negotiations. I will not trouble the House by going into the history of these negotiations now, further than just to state two facts, which will not take more than a few sentences. The noble Lord referred to the note which Russia wanted Turkey to sign, known as the Menchikoff note; but the noble Lord knows as well as I do, that when the French Ambassador, M. De la Cour, went to Constantinople, or whilst he was at Constantinople, he received express instructions from the Emperor of the French not to take upon himself the responsibility of inciting the Sultan to reject that note. ['No.'] I know this is the fact, because it is stated in Lord Cowley's despatch to the noble Lord.

I am expressing no opinion on the propriety of what was here done; I simply state the fact: and it was through the interference of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe—acting, I presume, in accordance with instructions from our Cabinet, and promising the intervention of the fleets—that the rejection of that note was secured. The next fact I have to mention is this. When in September, last year, the last propositions were drawn up by Counts Buol and Nesselrode, and offered at Olmütz by the Emperor, as a final settlement of the question, although Austria and Prussia were in favour of those propositions; though Lord Westmoreland himself said (I do not quote his exact words, but their substance) that they were of such a nature as might be received; thus indicating his favourable opinion of them; and though, likewise, the Emperor of the French himself declared that they guarded all the points in which England and France were concerned (for this was stated by Count Walewski when he said that the Emperor was prepared to order his Ambassador at Constantinople to sign them along

with the other Ambassadors, and to offer them to the Porte in exchange for the Vienna note), nevertheless, the Earl of Clarendon wrote, not in a very statesmanlike manner in such an emergency, but in almost a contemptuous tone, that our Government would not, upon any consideration, have anything further to do with the Vienna note. The rejection, first of the amended Menchikoff note, and then of the Olmütz note, was a policy adopted solely by the Government of this country, and only concurred in, but not recommended, by the French Government and the other Governments of Europe. Whether this policy was right or wrong, there can be no doubt of the fact; and I am prepared to stake my reputation for accuracy and for a knowledge of the English language on this interpretation of the documents which have been laid before us. That being so, on what pretence could we expect that Austria should go to war in company with us for objects far beyond what she thought satisfactory at the beginning? or why should we ask the Emperor of the French to go to war for objects which he did not contemplate, and to insist on conditions which, in the month of September of last year, he thought wholly unnecessary?

But one fact more I hope the House will allow me to state. There is a despatch in existence which was never produced to the people of this country, but which made its first appearance in a St. Petersburg newspaper, and was afterwards published in the Paris journals—a despatch in which the Emperor of the French, or his Minister, urged the Russian Government to accept the Vienna note on the express ground—I give the exact words—that 'its general sense differed in nothing from the sense of the original propositions of Prince Menchikoff.' Why, Sir, can there be dissimulation more extraordinary—can there be guilt more conclusive than that this Government should act as it did, after it had recommended the Emperor of Russia to accept the Vienna note? For the noble Lord has told us, over and over again, that the Government of England concurred in all the steps taken by the French Government. The House will allow me to read the very words of the despatch, for, after all, this is no very small matter. I have an English translation, but the French original is underneath, and any hon. Gentleman who chooses may see it. The despatch is from M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French Foreign Minister, who states:—

'That which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg ought to desire is an act of the Porte, which testifies that it has taken into serious consideration the mission of Prince Menchikoff, and that it renders homage to the sympathies which an identity of religion inspires in the Emperor Nicholas for all Christians of the Eastern rite.'

And farther on:—

'They [the French Government] submit it to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg with the hope that it will find that its general sense differs in nothing from the sense of the proposition presented by Prince Menchikoff.'

The French words are:—

'Que son sens général ne diffère en rien du sens du projet présenté par M. le Prince Menchikoff.'

It then goes on:—

'And that it gives it satisfaction on all the essential points of its demands. The slight variation in the form of it will not be observed by the masses of the people, either in Russia or in Turkey. To their eyes, the step taken by the Porte [that is, in accepting it] will preserve all the signification which the Cabinet of St. Petersburg wishes to give it; and His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas will appear to them always as the powerful and respected protector of their religious faith.'

This despatch was written, recommending *la note Française;* which is the basis of, and is in reality and substance

the same thing with the Vienna note; but, up to this moment, neither the Government of France nor the Government of which the noble Lord is a Member has for an instant denied the justice—I do not say the extent or degree—but the justice of the claim made on the part of the Russian Government against the Turks; and now they turn round upon their own note and tell you that there was a different construction put upon it. Was there any construction put upon it, which was different from the recommendation here made and the argument used by the French Government? No; and the whole of that statement is a statement that is delusive, and if I were not in this House I would characterise it by a harsher epithet. I say now what I stated in March last, and what I have since said and written to the country, that you are making war against the Government which accepted your own terms of peace; and I state this now only for the purpose of urging upon the House and upon the Government that you are bound at least, after making war for many months, to exact no further terms from the State with which you are at war, than such as will give that security which at first you believed to be necessary; and that if you carry on a war for vengeance—if you carry on a war for conquest—if you carry on a war for purposes of Government at home, as many wars have been carried on in past times, I say you will be guilty of a heinous crime, alike in the eyes of God and of man.

One other remark perhaps the House will permit me to make. The noble Lord spoke very confidently to-night; and a very considerable portion of his speech—hoping, as I do, for the restoration of peace at some time or another—was to me not very satisfactory. I think that he would only be acting a more statesmanlike part if, in his speeches, he were at least to abstain from those trifling but still irritating charges which he is constantly making against the Russian Government. I can conceive one nation going to war with another nation; but why should the noble Lord say, 'The Sovereign of that State does not allow Bibles to be circulated—he suppressed this thing here, and he put down something else there'? What did one of the noble Lord's present colleagues say of the Government of our ally? Did he not thank God that his despotism could not suppress or gag our newspaper press, and declare that the people of France were subject to the worst tyranny in Europe? These statements from a Minister—from one who has been Prime Minister, and who, for aught I know, may be again Prime Minister—show a littleness that I did not expect from a statesman of this country, whose fate and whose interests hang on every word the noble Lord utters, and when the fate of thousands, aye, and of tens of thousands, may depend on whether the noble Lord should make one false step in the position in which he is now placed.

And when terrible calamities were coming upon your army, where was this Government? One Minister was in Scotland, another at the sea-side, and for six weeks no meeting of the Cabinet took place. I do not note when Cabinets are held—I sometimes observe that they sit for four or five hours at a time, and then I think something is wrong—but for six weeks, or two months, it is said no meeting of the Ministers was held. The noble Lord President was making a small speech on a great subject somewhere in Cumberland. At Bedford he descanted on the fate of empires, forgetting that there was nothing so likely to destroy an empire as unnecessary wars. At Bristol he was advocating a new History of England, which, if impartially written, I know not how the noble Lord's policy for the last few months will show to posterity. The noble Lord the Member for Tiverton undertook a more difficult task—a labour left unaccomplished by Voltaire—and, when he addressed the Hampshire peasantry,

in one short sentence he overturned the New Testament and destroyed the foundations of the Christian religion.

Now, Sir, I have only to speak on one more point. My hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding, in what he said about the condition of the English army in the Crimea, I believe expressed only that which all in this House feel, and which, I trust, every person in this country capable of thinking feels. When I look at Gentlemen on that bench, and consider all their policy has brought about within the past twelve months, I scarcely dare trust myself to speak of them, either in or out of their presence. We all know what we have lost in this House. Here, sitting near me, very often sat the Member for Frome (Colonel Boyle). I met him a short time before he went out, at Mr. Westerton's, the bookseller, near Hyde Park Corner. I asked him whether he was going out? He answered, he was afraid he was; not afraid in the sense of personal fear—he knew not that; but he said, with a look and a tone I shall never forget, 'It is no light matter for a man who has a wife and five little children.' The stormy Euxine is his grave; his wife is a widow, his children fatherless. On the other side of the House sat a Member, with whom I was not acquainted, who has lost his life, and another of whom I knew something (Colonel Blair). Who is there that does not recollect his frank, amiable, and manly countenance? I doubt whether there were any men on either side of the House who were more capable of fixing the goodwill and affection of those with whom they were associated. Well, but the place that knew them shall know them no more for ever.

I have specified only two; but there are a hundred officers who have been killed in battle, or who have died of their wounds; forty have died of disease; and more than two hundred others have been wounded more or less severely. This has been a terribly destructive war to officers. They have been, as one would have expected them to be, the first in valour as the first in place; they have suffered more in proportion to their numbers than the commonest soldiers in the ranks. This has spread sorrow over the whole country. I was in the House of Lords when the vote of thanks was moved. In the gallery were many ladies, three-fourths of whom were dressed in the deepest mourning. Is this nothing? And in every village, cottages are to be found into which sorrow has entered, and as I believe, through the policy of the Ministry, which might have been avoided. No one supposes that the Government wished to spread the pall of sorrow over the land; but this we had a right to expect, that they would at least show becoming gravity in discussing a subject the appalling consequences of which may come home to individuals and to the nation. I recollect when Sir Robert Peel addressed the House on a dispute which threatened hostilities with the United States,—I recollect the gravity of his countenance, the solemnity of his tone, his whole demeanour showing that he felt in his soul the responsibility that rested on him.

I have seen this, and I have seen the present Ministry. There was the buffoonery at the Reform Club. Was that becoming a matter of this grave nature? Has there been a solemnity of manner in the speeches heard in connection with this war—and have Ministers shown themselves statesmen and Christian men when speaking on a subject of this nature? It is very easy for the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton to rise and say that I am against war under all circumstances; and that if an enemy were to land on our shores, I should make a calculation as to whether it would be cheaper to take him in or keep him out, and that my opinion on this question is not to be considered either by Parliament or the country. I am not afraid of discussing the war with the noble Lord on his own principles. I understand

the Blue Books as well as he; and, leaving out all fantastic and visionary notions about what will become of us if something is not done to destroy or to cripple Russia, I say—and I say it with as much confidence as I ever said anything in my life—that the war cannot be justified out of these documents; and that impartial history will teach this to posterity if we do not comprehend it now.

I am not, nor did I ever pretend to be, a statesman; and that character is so tainted and so equivocal in our day, that I am not sure that a pure and honourable ambition would aspire to it. I have not enjoyed for thirty years, like these noble Lords, the honours and emoluments of office. I have not set my sails to every passing breeze. I am a plain and simple citizen, sent here by one of the foremost constituencies of the Empire, representing feebly, perhaps, but honestly, I dare aver, the opinions of very many, and the true interests of all those who have sent me here. Let it not be said that I am alone in my condemnation of this war, and of this incapable and guilty Administration. And, even if I were alone, if mine were a solitary voice, raised amid the din of arms and the clamours of a venal press, I should have the consolation I have to-night—and which I trust will be mine to the last moment of my existence—the priceless consolation that no word of mine has tended to promote the squandering of my country's treasure or the spilling of one single drop of my country's blood.

RUSSIA.

III.

NEGOTIATIONS AT VIENNA.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 23, 1855.

From Hansard.

[On February 22 Lord Palmerston announced in the House of Commons that Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Sidney Herbert, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Cardwell, the President of the Board of Trade, and Sir James Graham, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had resigned the offices which they had accepted a fortnight before. The ground of this secession was the impression entertained by the above-named personages that the Committee of Inquiry moved for by Mr. Roebuck was equivalent to a vote of censure on them, as they had formed part of the Government of Lord Aberdeen, whose conduct of the Russian war was impugned by the appointment of the Committee. The places vacated by these secessions were filled up on February 28.]

I AM one of those forming the majority of the House, I suspect, who are disposed to look upon our present position as one of more than ordinary gravity. I am one, also, of those, not probably constituting so great a majority of the House, who regret extremely the circumstances which have obliged the right hon. Gentlemen who are now upon this bench to secede from the Government of the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton. I do not take upon me for a moment to condemn them; because I think, if there be anything in which a man must judge for himself, it is whether he should take office if it be offered to him, whether he should secede from office, whether he should serve under a particular leader, or engage in the service of the Crown, or retain office in a particular emergency. In such cases I think that the decision must be left to his own conscience and his own judgment; and I should be the last person to condemn any one for the decision to which he might come. I think, however, that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman is one which the House cannot have listened to without being convinced that he and his retiring Colleagues have been moved to the course which they have taken by a deliberate judgment upon this question, which, whether it be right or wrong, is fully explained, and is honest to the House and to the country.

Now, Sir, I said that I regretted their secession, because I am one of those who do not wish to see the Government of the noble Lord the Member for

Tiverton overthrown. The House knows well, and nobody knows better than the noble Lord, that I have never been one of his ardent and enthusiastic supporters. I have often disapproved of his policy both at home and abroad; but I hope that I do not bear to him, as I can honestly say that I do not bear to any man in this House—for from all I have received unnumbered courtesies—any feeling that takes even the tinge of personal animosity; and even if I did, at a moment so grave as this, no feeling of a personal character whatever should prevent me from doing that which I think now, of all times, we are called upon to do—that which we honestly and conscientiously believe to be for the permanent interests of the country. We are in this position, that for a month past, at least, there has been a chaos in the regions of the Administration. Nothing can be more embarrassing—I had almost said nothing can be more humiliating—than the position which we offer to the country; and I am afraid that the knowledge of our position is not confined to the limits of these islands.

It will be admitted that we want a Government; that if the country is to be saved from the breakers which now surround it, there must be a Government; and it devolves upon the House of Commons to rise to the gravity of the occasion, and to support any man who is conscious of his responsibility, and who is honestly offering and endeavouring to deliver the country from the embarrassment in which we now find it. We are at war, and I shall not say one single sentence with regard to the policy of the war or its origin, and I know not that I shall say a single sentence with regard to the conduct of it; but the fact is that we are at war with the greatest military Power, probably, of the world, and that we are carrying on our operations at a distance of 3,000 miles from home, and in the neighbourhood of the strongest fortifications of that great military Empire. I will not stop to criticise—though it really invites me—the fact that some who have told us that we were in danger from the aggressions of that Empire, at the same time told us that that Empire was powerless for aggression, and also that it was impregnable to attack. By some means, however, the public have been alarmed as if that aggressive power were unbounded, and they have been induced to undertake an expedition, as if the invasion of an impregnable country were a matter of holiday-making rather than of war.

But we are now in a peculiar position with regard to that war; for, if I am not mistaken—and I think I gathered as much from the language of the right hon. Gentleman—at this very moment terms have been agreed upon—agreed upon by the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen; consented to by the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton when he was in that Cabinet; and ratified and confirmed by him upon the formation of his own Government—and that those terms are now specifically known and understood; and that they have been offered to the Government with which this country is at war, and in conjunction with France and Austria—one, certainly, and the other supposed to be—an ally of this country. Now, those terms consist of four propositions, which I shall neither describe nor discuss, because they are known to the House; but three of them are not matters of dispute; and with regard to the other, I think that the noble Lord the Member for the City of of London stated, upon a recent occasion, that it was involved in this proposition, —that the preponderant power of Russia in the Black Sea should cease, and that Russia had accepted it with that interpretation. Therefore, whatever difference arises is merely as to the mode in which that 'preponderant power' shall be understood or made to cease. Now, there are some Gentlemen not far from me—there are men who write in the public press—there are thousands of persons in the United Kingdom at this moment—and I learn with astonishment and dismay that there are persons even in that grave assembly which we are not

allowed to specify by a name in this House—who have entertained dreams—impracticable theories—expectations of vast European and Asiatic changes, of revived nationalities, and of a new map of Europe, if not of the world, as a result or an object of this war. And it is from those Gentlemen that we hear continually, addressed to the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton, language which I cannot well understand. They call upon him to act, to carry on the war with vigour, and to prosecute enterprises which neither his Government nor any other Government has ever seriously entertained; but I would appeal to those Gentlemen whether it does not become us—regarding the true interests and the true honour of the country—if our Government have offered terms of peace to Russia, not to draw back from those terms, not to cause any unnecessary delay, not to adopt any subterfuge to prevent those terms being accepted, not to attempt shuffles of any kind, not to endeavour to insist upon harder terms, and thus make the approach of peace even still more distant than it is at present?

Whatever may be said about the honour of the country in any other relation involved in this affair, this, at least, I expect every man who hears me to admit—that if terms of peace have been offered they have been offered in good faith, and shall be in honour and good faith adhered to; so that if, unfortunately for Europe and humanity, there should be any failure at Vienna, no man should point to the English Government and to the authorities and rulers of this Christian country, and say that we have prolonged the war and the infinite calamities of which it is the cause.

I have said that I was anxious that the Government of the noble Lord should not be overthrown. Will the House allow me to say why I am so? The noble Lord at the head of the Government has long been a great authority with many persons in this country upon foreign policy. His late colleague, and present envoy to Vienna, has long been a great authority with a large portion of the people of this country upon almost all political questions. With the exception of that unhappy selection of an ambassador at Constantinople, I hold that there are no men in this country more truly responsible for our present position in this war than the noble Lord who now fills the highest office in the State and the noble Lord who is now, I trust, rapidly approaching the scene of his labours in Vienna. I do not say this now to throw blame upon those noble Lords, because their policy, which I hold to be wrong, they, without doubt, as firmly believe to be right; but I am only stating facts. It has been their policy that they have entered into war for certain objects, and I am sure that neither the noble Lord at the head of the Government nor his late colleague the noble Lord the Member for London will shrink from the responsibility which attaches to them. Well, Sir, now we have those noble Lords in a position which is, in my humble opinion, favourable to the termination of the troubles which exist. I think that the noble Lord at the head of the Government himself would have more influence in stilling whatever may exist of clamour in this country than any other Member of this House. I think, also, that the noble Lord the Member for London would not have undertaken the mission to Vienna if he had not entertained some strong belief that, by so doing, he might bring the war to an end. Nobody gains reputation by a failure in negotiation, and as that noble Lord is well acquainted with the whole question from the beginning to end, I entertain a hope—I will not say a sanguine hope—that the result of that mission to Vienna will be to bring about a peace, to extricate this country from some of those difficulties inseparable from a state of war.

There is one subject upon which I should like to put a question to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. I shall not say one word here

about the state of the army in the Crimea, or one word about its numbers or its condition. Every Member of this House, every inhabitant of this country, has been sufficiently harrowed with details regarding it. To my solemn belief, thousands—nay, scores of thousands of persons—have retired to rest, night after night, whose slumbers have been disturbed or whose dreams have been based upon the sufferings and agonies of our soldiers in the Crimea. I should like to ask the noble Lord at the head of the Government—although I am not sure if he will feel that he can or ought to answer the question—whether the noble Lord the Member for London has power, after discussions have commenced, and as soon as there shall be established good grounds for believing that the negotiations for peace will prove successful, to enter into any armistice? ['No! no!']

I know not, Sir, who it is that says 'No, no,' but I should like to see any man get up and say that the destruction of 200,000 human lives lost on all sides during the course of this unhappy conflict is not a sufficient sacrifice. You are not pretending to conquer territory—you are not pretending to hold fortified or unfortified towns; you have offered terms of peace which, as I understand them, I do not say are not moderate; and breathes there a man in this House or in this country whose appetite for blood is so insatiable that, even when terms of peace have been offered and accepted, he pines for that assault in which of Russian, Turk, French, and English, as sure as one man dies, 20,000 corpses will strew the streets of Sebastopol? I say I should like to ask the noble Lord—and I am sure that he will feel, and that this House will feel, that I am speaking in no unfriendly manner towards the Government of which he is at the head—I should like to know, and I venture to hope that it is so, if the noble Lord the Member for London has power, at the earliest stage of these proceedings at Vienna, at which it can properly be done—and I should think that it might properly be done at a very early stage—to adopt a course by which all further waste of human life may be put an end to, and further animosity between three great nations be, as far as possible, prevented?

I appeal to the noble Lord at the head of the Government and to this House; I am not now complaining of the war—I am not now complaining of the terms of peace, nor, indeed, of anything that has been done—but I wish to suggest to this House what, I believe, thousands and tens of thousands of the most educated and of the most Christian portion of the people of this country are feeling upon this subject, although, indeed, in the midst of a certain clamour in the country, they do not give public expression to their feelings. Your country is not in an advantageous state at this moment; from one end of the kingdom to the other there is a general collapse of industry. Those Members of this House not intimately acquainted with the trade and commerce of the country do not fully comprehend our position as to the diminution of employment and the lessening of wages. An increase in the cost of living is finding its way to the homes and hearts of a vast number of the labouring population.

At the same time there is growing up—and, notwithstanding what some hon. Members of this House may think of me, no man regrets it more than I do—a bitter and angry feeling against that class which has for a long period conducted the public affairs of this country. I like political changes when such changes are made as the result, not of passion, but of deliberation and reason. Changes so made are safe, but changes made under the influence of violent exaggeration, or of the violent passions of public meetings, are not changes usually approved by this House or advantageous to the country. I cannot but notice, in speaking to Gentlemen who sit on either side of this House, or in speaking to any one I

meet between this House and any of those localities we frequent when this House is up—I cannot, I say, but notice that an uneasy feeling exists as to the news which may arrive by the very next mail from the East. I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born were slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.

I tell the noble Lord, that if he be ready honestly and frankly to endeavour, by the negotiations about to be opened at Vienna, to put an end to this war, no word of mine, no vote of mine, will be given to shake his power for one single moment, or to change his position in this House. I am sure that the noble Lord is not inaccessible to appeals made to him from honest motives and with no unfriendly feeling. The noble Lord has been for more than forty years a Member of this House. Before I was born, he sat upon the Treasury bench, and he has spent his life in the service of his country. He is no longer young, and his life has extended almost to the term allotted to man. I would ask, I would entreat the noble Lord to take a course which, when he looks back upon his whole political career—whatever he may therein find to be pleased with, whatever to regret—cannot but be a source of gratification to him. By adopting that course he would have the satisfaction of reflecting that, having obtained the object of his laudable ambition—having become the foremost subject of the Crown, the director of, it may be, the destinies of his country, and the presiding genius in her councils—he had achieved a still higher and nobler ambition: that he had returned the sword to the scabbard—that at his word torrents of blood had ceased to flow—that he had restored tranquillity to Europe, and saved this country from the indescribable calamities of war.

RUSSIA.

IV.

ON THE PROSECUTION OF THE RUSSIAN WAR.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 7, 1855.

From Hansard.

[On May 22 Mr. Disraeli moved, 'That this House cannot adjourn for the Recess without expressing its dissatisfaction with the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of Her Majesty's Government in reference to the great question of peace or war, and that, under these circumstances, the House feels it a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war, until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for the country a safe and honourable peace.' This was met by an amendment from Sir Francis Baring, 'That this House, having seen with regret that the Conferences at Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it to be a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for this country a safe and honourable peace.' Mr. Disraeli's resolution was rejected by 319 votes to 219. Sir F. Baring's motion having become substantive, was met by an amendment of Mr. Lowe, to the effect, 'That this House having seen with regret, owing to the refusal of Russia to restrict the strength of her navy in the Black Sea, that the Conferences at Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it to be a duty to declare that the means of coming to an agreement on the third basis of negotiation being by that refusal exhausted, it will continue,' &c. Mr. Lowe's amendment was negatived and Sir F. Baring's motion carried without a division on June 8.]

Last year, when the declaration of war was brought down to the House, I took the opportunity of addressing the House in opposition to the policy of the Government of that day. I was told I was too late; and it has been also said repeatedly in this debate that those who take the views which I take are too late on this occasion. It seems to be one of the consequences of the, I would say, irresponsible system of diplomacy in this country w...on, or of the violent affairs, that ...ublic meetings, are not discuss a ...ially approved by this House but only w...geous to the country. I can-no rem... notice, in speaking to Gentle-we ar... who sit on either side of this House, or in speaking to any one I

at Vienna; and, though we were repeatedly told from the Treasury bench that it might be injurious to the public service to discuss what was going on till the affair was concluded, I suspect the House has come to the conclusion that we have been pursuing our true duty to the country in the debate that has taken place.

We are indebted to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) for having placed his notice on the table of the House, and not less to my right hon. Friend and Colleague that he, before the recess, moved the adjournment of the debate. I am satisfied myself that the people of this country have no intention to go wrong either in home or foreign affairs, and it requires only that questions of this nature should be frequently discussed by the intelligent men of which this House is composed to set before them the true state of affairs, and to bring them to a wise opinion with regard to the policy which is being pursued. Now, we are not discussing the policy of the war—that is, of the origin of the war. If we were, I should lay claim to some degree of foresight in the opinion which I expressed a year ago, for there seems to be a general feeling that the sacrifices that have already been made are somewhat greater than the results that have been obtained. I am anxious, in the observations I may have to address to the House, to impress my opinions on them, if it be possible to do so, and to lay before my countrymen out of the House that which I believe involves their true interests with regard to this question. It is necessary, therefore, to have a basis for our discussion—to fix what were the objects of the war—to ascertain, if that be possible, whether tho[illegible] been secured and [illegible]ther there can [illegible]hich we are [illegible] justify the [illegible] in pro- [illegible] [illegible]not

about to carry on this discussion with the Gentlemen below me, who are interested in a question which is not the question before the House. They are interested in some vast, and, as it seems to me, imaginary scheme that would involve Europe in protracted and widely-extended hostilities; and I think that, so far as the House is concerned in discussing the question with the Government, these Gentlemen are almost, if not altogether, out of court. It appears to me, if they were logical in their course, finding that the objects of the Government and the objects of the Government of France were entirely different from those which they have at heart, and believing, as they do, that the objects of the allied Governments are not worth a war, that they ought rather to join us on this bench, and, instead of there being one Peace bench in the House, there would be two Peace benches, and the Peace party would clearly gain a considerable accession of strength. The noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies has stated over and over again—and, amid the confusion of statements which he and his Colleagues have made, I think he will not find fault if I assume that the object of the war is simply the security of the Turkish territory from the grasp of Russia, and probably from the grasp of any other Power—the noble Lord has stated that he apprehends that if Russia were to extend her empire by the possession of Turkey, it would give her a power that would be unsafe with regard to the other nations of Europe. When the noble Lord speaks in that vague, and, if I were not speaking of a man so eminent, I should say, absurd language of the liberties of Europe and the civilization of the world, I should say he means by that merely those great objects, so far as they can be conserved by the conservation of the Turkish territory.

The noble Lord tells us—we are now getting out of some of the mystifications—that he has no kind of sympathy that would lead him into war for the

oppressed nationalities of Europe. The noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (Viscount Palmerston) a few nights ago turned the cold shoulder to the people of Hungary. He said he thought there could be no greater calamity to Europe than that Hungary should be separated from the Austrian Empire. Well, then, we have got rid of Hungary; and, next, the noble Lord the Member for the City of London (Lord John Russell) tells us it is quite a mistake to suppose that he ever intended to go to war for Poland. In fact, he stated—what will be very disheartening to hon. Gentlemen below me—that he never supposed we were going to war for such a Quixotic object; that the case of Poland is one that is hopeless, and therefore it would be madness in England and France—not indiscretion—not a doubtful undertaking—but positive madness in England and France to take any part in promoting resistance in that country.

Having now got rid of Hungary and Poland, we only require that some Member of the Cabinet should get up later in the evening—and that I have no doubt will be the case—to state that it is utterly impossible for this country to involve itself in hostilities with a view to the regeneration of any part of Italy. The noble Lord the Member for London tells us we are not going to war for the sake of conquest; and that, I think, is a matter which ought to be kept in mind by hon. Gentlemen who are urging the Government on to a prolonged war. He stated on Tuesday night, 'Be it always remembered that we are seeking no object of our own;'—it would be a very odd thing if we were to go to war for the objects of somebody else—'that we are seeking no object of our own; that when peace is concluded we shall not have acquired one ell of new territory, or secured any advantage whatever for ourselves. It is for Turkey and the general system of Europe that we are struggling.' In fact, the whole matter always resolves itself into some general mystification, and at this moment we are, every man of us, almost entirely in the dark as to what are the ultimate objects of the war.

One other point that I ought to mention is the question of crippling and humbling Russia. I am, of course, willing to admit that when people go to war they are not expected to be very nice in their treatment of each other, and, if the taking of Sebastopol be an object of those who are in favour of the war, to take Sebastopol they will inflict any injury they can upon Russia. But the noble Lord told us last year that he still intended to leave Russia a great empire. I thought that exceedingly considerate of the noble Lord, and I understand—I think it has been stated in the public papers—that it is considered at St. Petersburg a great condescension on the part of so eminent a statesman. Well, then, if we are not going to war for nationalities, nor for conquest, nor for any such crippling of Russia as would be effected by her dismemberment, we come to this simple question—in the condition in which Turkey has long existed, what are the means by which the security of Turkey can be best guaranteed? No man asserts that the security of Turkey can be absolute, but that it must be partial and conditional. As it is well to have high authority for these statements, I have here an extract from a speech made by Lord Clarendon a few nights ago on the Resolution moved by Lord Grey. The noble Lord then stated:—

'My noble Friend says, and says truly, that the attainment of all this would offer no security to Turkey. The value of a treaty must always depend upon the spirit in which it is agreed to, and the good faith with which it is entered into. No treaty can make a weak Power like Turkey perfectly safe against a powerful neighbour immediately in contact with her, if that neighbour is determined to act the aggressive towards her.'—[3 *Hansard*, cxxxviii. 1152.]

Thus Lord Clarendon admits, what is perfectly obvious to the common sense of all who have heard anything of

Russia or Turkey, except from the lips of the Prime Minister, that what we are seeking to obtain is not an absolute security for Turkey, but a conditional security, such as her circumstances, her population, her government, and geographical position render attainable by her friends and allies. We have now been fourteen months at war, and two Cabinets—the Cabinets of Lord Aberdeen and of the present First Minister—I might say four Cabinets, for the Cabinets of France and Austria must have agreed to the same thing—have agreed to certain terms, and have offered them to Russia. They have been accepted as the basis of negotiations, conferences have been opened, and certain proceedings towards a settlement have taken place; and now I should like to know whether the terms which were offered were offered in earnest. Judging of the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen by the conduct of some of its Members, and especially of Lord Aberdeen himself, I am certain that they were sincere in the terms they offered. But the *Times* newspaper, which now in its many changes has become the organ and great stimulant of the present Cabinet, expresses its astonishment that any person should think that peace was intended by the Conferences at Vienna. The *Times* states that the object of the Conferences was not to bring about a peace, but to shame Austria into becoming a faithful and warlike ally.

Now, when the noble Lord the Member for London was sent to Vienna to negotiate, I confess I was one of those who formed the opinion that the noble Lord, amid the many eccentricities of his career, would not have undertaken that mission unless he himself had been honest with regard to the terms to be offered, and anxious, if possible, to consolidate a peace. There were, however, certain persons—malicious people, of course—who found out that it would be convenient to the First Minister to have the noble Lord at a distance, at least for a time. But I never adopted that idea. I did not believe that the noble Lord's journey to Vienna, with a retinue that required him to occupy no less than thirty-two rooms in one hotel, would have been undertaken unless the noble Lord considered that the object was a reality, on which the interests of the country and of Europe depended. I think he would have been the last man in the country to lend himself to such a miserable hoax as going to Vienna, not to make peace, but to shame Austria into becoming a faithful and warlike ally. I assume, therefore, that terms were sincerely offered, and that those terms gave guarantees which were sufficient, and a security which was as ample as the circumstances admitted for the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire. It is from that starting-point that I would discuss this question.

There are hon. Members in this House who think that even if those terms were obtained they would still be in no degree a compensation for the enormous sacrifices which the country has made. I happen to hold the same opinion, and it was with that conviction that I protested against going into the war. Indeed, I think that the argument I used a year ago, that nothing to be obtained in the war could at all approach a compensation for the enormous sacrifices the country would be called upon to make, has been greatly strengthened. Well, Sir, the terms offered are called 'bases:' from which one understands, not that they are everything, but that they are something capable of what diplomatists call 'development.' I recollect a question asked of a child at school, in one of those lessons called 'object lessons,' 'What is the basis of a batter pudding?' It was obvious that flour was the basis, but the eggs and the butter and the rest were developments and additions. But if the bases are capable of development, so I take it for granted that the meaning of negotiation is not the offering of an *ultimatum*, but the word involves to every man's sense the probability of concession—butter, it may be—but concession of one sort or another.

I will not go through all the Four Points, because the attention of the House ought really to be centred upon the third article and the matters connected with it. The House must remember that this article involves two most important subjects—first, the territorial guarantee, which if it were sufficiently secured would be everything the House and the country required from the war—namely, that the territories of Turkey shall never be molested, so long as the treaty shall continue, by any of the great Powers who are parties to such treaty; and, secondly, that the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea shall cease. Now, the territorial guarantee was granted without difficulty. [An hon. Member: 'No.'] Well, no difficulty was made about the territorial guarantee but this: Prince Gortchakoff said, very wisely, that he would not enter into an absolute pledge to go to war in case of any infraction of the treaty, and the noble Lord who said 'No' will find, when he has examined the question a little more closely, that it does not make the slightest difference as to the actual results of a treaty whether a Power guarantees in the mode proposed by Russia, or in the manner proposed by the noble Lord the Member for the City of London, because, when an infraction of a treaty occurs, the power of judging whether any of the Governments who are parties to such treaty should go to war or not, is left with each individual Government. If, for example, France stretched her dominions westward towards Morocco, or eastward towards Tunis or Tripoli, it would, of course, have been the duty, and would have been in the power of Russia, even had she accepted the exact terms proposed by the allies, to judge for herself whether a case had arisen which required her to go to war, or which justified her in doing so.

Such a case arose very lately with reference to Schleswig-Holstein. We were bound, under an ancient treaty, to go to war in the event of the infraction of certain treaties affecting Schleswig-Holstein; but when this case occurred the subject was considered by the Government, the noble Lord (Lord Palmerston) being at the time, I believe, Foreign Secretary—who most wisely and properly, not only for this country, but for the interests of Schleswig-Holstein and of Europe, declined to act upon what was represented to be the strict letter of the treaty, and England did not engage in war in consequence of the disputes which then took place. I must say that what seems to me as the most statesmanlike and elevated declaration in the protocols is the statement of Prince Gortchakoff, that the blood of Russia is the property of Russia, and that he will not pledge himself that years hence—it may be even a century hence—the blood of Russia shall be shed in a cause which, when the time arrives, may be one which would be altogether unworthy of such a sacrifice.

With respect to the question of the Christian protectorate, the House will probably recollect that it was represented over and over again by Ministers in this House—it was stated in the speeches of Lord Clarendon in another place—that the proposition of Russia, as conveyed in the Menchikoff note, was intended to transfer the virtual sovereignty of 10,000,000 or 12,000,000 of Ottoman subjects to the Czar. If that were so, the Menchikoff note and all the old protectorate treaties being abolished, surely the House will consider whether the combination of the three propositions—the territorial guarantees, the Christian protectorate, and the Black Sea project—do not give such securities to Turkey as the condition of Turkey will permit. Now the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea, as I think my hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden) showed very clearly the other evening, is in a certain sense a fact which all the negotiations in the world cannot write off. I see that one of the public journals this morning, commenting upon my hon. Friend's speech, says, 'Yes, truly, the

commercial preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea is a fact which cannot be denied;' and then proceeds to argue that it does not follow that Russia should have a political and naval preponderance. But I do not know any case in which there is a commercial supremacy in a sea like the Black Sea that is not followed by a preponderance of every other kind. The question now is, however, how is that preponderance to cease?

The noble Lord the Member for the City of London referred the other night to a proposition made by the French Government, but which, I think, does not appear at all distinctly in the protocols, with regard to making the Black Sea a neutral sea. I conceive that was so monstrous a proposition, in the present condition of Europe, that I am surprised it should have been entertained for a moment by any sensible man. I supposed it was found so utterly indefensible that it does not appear as a distinct proposition in the protocols. This proposal of making the Black Sea a neutral sea gave place to another project, and it appears to me very like asking Russia, voluntarily or by compulsion, to perform the operation of amputation upon herself. I maintain that the third article as offered to Russia in December last could not mean what the noble Lord offered to Russia at Vienna, because the cessation of preponderance does not mean the transfer of preponderance, but rather the establishment of an equilibrium—not the destruction of an equilibrium and the establishment of preponderance on the other side.

Some hon. Gentlemen talk as if Russia were a Power which you could take to Bow Street, and bind over before some stipendiary magistrate to keep the peace for six months. Russia is a great Power, as England is, and in treating with her you must consider that the Russian Government has to consult its own dignity, its own interests, and public opinion, just as much at least as the Government of this country. Now, what was the proposition of this third article? The proposal was, that Russia should have eight ships; but what was the proposition with regard to her present antagonists? That Turkey should also have eight ships, that France should have four, and that England should have four; and I believe that in a preceding protocol, which has not been alluded to in this debate, it is proposed that the contracting Powers should have two ships each at the mouth of the Danube, so that if these terms had been agreed upon, Russia would have had eight ships in the Black Sea, while Turkey, France, and England would have had twenty. Now, that is not a mere cessation of a preponderance; it is not the establishment of an equilibrium; it is a transfer of the supremacy of the Black Sea from that country which, if any country should be supreme there, has the best claim—namely, Russia. Besides this, however, Turkey would have had whatever ships she liked in the Bosphorus, and the allies would also have had as many ships as they chose in the Mediterranean and the Levant.

Now, let us for a moment consider the offer with which Russia met this proposal. The first proposition was that of the open Straits, which is disapproved by the hon. Baronet opposite. I am not about to say that this proposition should have been accepted in preference to the other, but I think it is the true interest of Europe, and also of Turkey itself, that the Straits should be thrown open. At any rate, it must be admitted that the preponderance of Russia, in the sense in which we now understand it, would be absolutely destroyed if the Straits were thrown open. Russia made a proposition which appears to me to be highly satisfactory—that such regulations should be made by the Sultan and his Government with regard to the position and duration of the anchorages of ships between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea as would preclude the possibility, so far as there were means of doing so, of any inconvenience or danger to Constantinople

from the opening of the Straits. If that had been agreed to, all nations would have been entitled to the passage of the Straits, and I believe that all nations would equally have respected the privilege thus granted to them. Now, suppose these Straits, instead of being one mile wide, had been ten miles wide, what difference would it make to Turkey? If the Straits were ten miles wide they would be open. Turkey would have no right to close them, and European nations would not permit her to pretend to, or to exercise, any such power; but Constantinople would be no more secure then than it would be now with the Straits open, whether they were ten miles wide or one mile wide. If the Straits were open, the consequences to Constantinople and to Turkey appear to me to be precisely the same. Turkey would be equally safe; Turkey would be equally menaced. Our fleets would visit the Black Sea in the course of the season, and the Russian Black Sea fleet, if it chose, would visit the Mediterranean. There would be no sort of pretence for wrangling about the Straits; and the balance of power—if I may use the term—between the fleets of Russia, France, and England, would be probably the best guarantee that could be offered for the security of Constantinople and Turkey, so far as they are in danger of aggression either from the Black Sea or the Mediterranean.

But it is said, the Sultan's sovereignty would be menaced—that he has an undoubted right to close the Straits. I doubt whether that right will be very long maintained; but if it be maintained, and if you are to reject any proposition which interferes with the Sultan's sovereignty, I ask you whether the sovereignty of the Czar is not as dear to him? and whether, if, in negotiations of this kind, you can find any mode of attaining your object without inflicting injury upon either the sovereignty of the Sultan or the Czar, it would not be much more statesmanlike to adopt it, and so to frame your treaties that neither should feel that it was subjected to an indignity, and therefore seek to violate such treaties at the first opportunity? Well, but the second proposition, which I think the hon. Baronet approved, and which I think the noble Lord proposed, was, that the Sultan should open the Straits at will. I ask the House whether that proposition, if accepted, would not imply that the Sultan could have no other enemy than Russia?—which I think is doubtful. If the Black Sea were open to the West, and the Mediterranean closed to the East, surely that is assuming that the Sultan could have no enemy but Russia. The Sultan could close the Straits to Russia, but the Western Powers could always proceed to the Black Sea. The French plan, in my opinion, exposed Turkey far more to the West than the Russian plan exposed her to the East. Nothing can be more short-sighted than the notion which the noble Lord the Member for London started at the conferences, that Turkey could have no enemy but Russia. In fact, everybody there seemed to be on exceedingly good terms with himself. The Austrian Minister said nobody would suspect Austria—no one could be suspected but Russia. But our experience for many years will tell us that there has been just as much menace from the West as from the East—the rapacity of the West is not less perceptible than that of the East. ['Hear.'] Some one expresses a sentiment in opposition—it is a gentleman who has never read the Blue Books—he does not know that almost the whole of this business began in a threat of the most audacious and insulting character from the Ambassador of France—a threat to order up the French fleet to the Dardanelles, and further to land an expedition in Syria to take possession of Jerusalem and the whole of the Holy Places. Do you mean to tell me, you and the noble Lord himself, who tried to frighten the country with the notion of the French fleet coming to invade England, that the fleet which three years ago threatened England, and more recently threatened

the Dardanelles, has for ever abandoned rapacious desires, and that therefore there will never again be a menace against Turkey from France?

I understand, however, there is a very different opinion prevalent upon the southern shores of the Mediterranean. The Emperor of Morocco, a potentate somewhat allied to this country, as I am told his empress is an Irish lady—the Emperor of Morocco, who is not very well versed in what is going on in this House, has been making inquiries of the most anxious character as to whether the particular guarantee which the noble Lord was going to enter into included the territory of Morocco; and I understand he has not been able to find it out from the most assiduous study of the Gibraltar newspapers. It so happens that the Governor of Gibraltar—the noble Lord at the head of the Government corrected me the other night when I called him an irrational man—has issued an ordinance by which he has entirely suppressed the newspaper press in that town and garrison.

Now we come to the question, which of the propositions would be most secure? I was very much struck by an observation which fell from my hon. Colleague (Mr. M. Gibson) in the course of his speech the other night—a point I think very worthy of the attention of the House and of the Government; he said the limitation plan was one which must depend for its efficacy on the will and fidelity of Russia. I am not one of those who believe Russia to be the treacherous and felonious Power which she is described to be by the press of this country, as she is described by the noble Lord to be. I believe the right hon. Baronet the Member for Southwark gave her the same character. Although Russia may not be more treacherous than other Powers, when you are making a bargain with her, it is better you should make the efficacy of the terms depend more on your own vigilance than on her good faith. The noble Lord the Member for London has admitted that the limitation plan is, after all, an inefficient one. He said that Russia might get another ship—perhaps three or four—and when she had doubled the navy permitted to her, perhaps the noble Lord would be writing despatches about it, although I am not sure he would do that. I think it would be holding out a temptation to buy Mr. Scott Russell's great ship as one of the eight ships she is to be allowed to keep by the treaty.

My hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding remarked that Russia might purchase vessels of large size from the United States, and still keep within the prescribed limit; but if this great ship, now building in the Thames, should succeed, as I hope she will, Russia might buy her and send her into the Black Sea. Somebody says she could not go there without passing the Straits, but, as she is built for mercantile purposes, that monster vessel might freely be taken up, and then form one of the eight ships allowed to Russia. Another proposition has been alluded to by the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets (Sir W. Clay)—that pointed out by the Russian Plenipotentiary—that Russia and Turkey should enter into a friendly treaty between themselves and arrange that point; but the other diplomatists would not allow it, unless it were done under the eyes of the conference and bearing the same features of force and compulsion as their proposal of the limitation possessed. I was astonished to hear the hon. Baronet, as I understood him, say that, even although it could be shown that the Russian propositions were better than our own, he thought the proposition which bore on its face coercion of Russia was most desirable. A more unstatesmanlike and immoral view upon a great question between nations I have rarely heard of. [Sir William Clay rose, and was understood to deny the sentiments imputed to him by the hon. Member.] I understood my hon. Friend so. Perhaps he did not mean what I thought he did mean, but that was the conclusion I came to

from his argument, and I do not think he will say I entirely misrepresented him. It has, however, been said by the press that, whether we were sincere or not at the conference, Russia was not. Hon. Gentlemen have read in the *Times* and other papers blowing the flames of war, that from first to last Russia was treacherous and insincere. I would put it to the noble Lord the Member for London whether he can say that was the case, for I observe he said, in his speech in this House on the 23rd of January last, in answer to a question from the hon. Member for Aylesbury, or some other Member—

'My hon. Friend will see that by that act the Russian Plenipotentiary accepted this interpretation as the basis of negotiation, of course reserving to himself the power, when this basis shall have been laid down in a definite article, of making any observations on the part of his Government which he should think proper.'—[3 *Hansard*, cxxxvi. 911.]

Of course the Russian Plenipotentiary, when he accepted it, did so upon the understanding that it was the basis of negotiation and discussion, as no one will deny it was a question capable of being solved in more ways than one, and it was no indication of insincerity for him to refuse the precise mode proposed by the Plenipotentiary for England. With regard to the terms proposed, I should like to read to the House a statement I have on very good authority as to the language which Prince Gortchakoff held at Vienna. The statement I have is not to be found in the protocols, but I believe it may be relied upon as the precise words he used. The noble Lord insisted, as I understand, that it was no indignity to ask Russia to limit the number of her ships in the Black Sea; but I would submit it is precisely the same in principle as if she were asked to limit the amount of her force in the Crimea to four or six regiments. Prince Gortchakoff said—

'To ask from an independent Power that it should limit its force, is to assail its rights of sovereignty on its own territory. It is with a bad grace that they would sustain the rights of the Sultan and wish to attack those of the Emperor of Russia. The proposition to render the Black Sea inaccessible to vessels of war of all nations is so strange (*si bizarre*) that one is astonished to see the fate of nations confided to men such as those who have conceived it. How could it be believed that Russia would consent to give herself up disarmed at the good pleasure of the *Napoleons* and *the Palmerstons*, who will be able themselves to have armed forces in the Mediterranean?'

There was no answer to that. If any diplomatist from this country, under the same circumstances as Russia was placed in, had consented to terms such as the noble Lord had endeavoured to force upon Russia—I say, that if he entered the door of this House, he would be met by one universal shout of execration, and, as a public man, would be ruined for ever.

I wish to ask the House this question—whether it has deliberately made up its mind that this was a proposition which ought to have been imposed upon Russia? If they have ascertained which is the best—and I rather think the general opinion is that the proposition of the Government is the worst; but, assuming that it is not so, and that there may be some little difference—I want to know what that difference is, and if there is any difference which can be measured even by the finest diplomatic and statesmanlike instrument ever invented, I ask, is that difference worth to this country the incalculable calamities which a prolonged war must bring upon us? I am of opinion that, with the territorial guarantee and the abolition of the Christian protectorate, either the terms proposed by the noble Lord or by Prince Gortchakoff would have been as secure for Turkey as it is possible under existing circumstances for Turkey to be by any treaty between

the great Powers of Europe. And, recollect that we have been thrown a little off the original proposition, for when that proposition was first agreed to in the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen I am satisfied in my own mind that it meant something very like that which the Russians themselves have proposed.

If we take this first protocol of the conference, and look to the speech made by Count Buol and to the proposition he made, you will find the third article runs in this language: 'The treaty of July 13, 1841, shall be revised with the double object,' and so on. But what is the meaning of revising the treaty of 1841? The treaty has only one object, which is to guarantee to the Turk the right he has claimed since his possession of Constantinople—namely, that the Straits should be closed under the guarantee of the Powers, except in case of war. Therefore, when the Aberdeen Government, of which the noble Lords were Members, originally agreed upon these terms, their object was that the Black Sea should be thrown open, or, at least, that the closing of the Straits should be relaxed; and I presume that it was not until after it was known that, while Russia had no objection to the opening of the Straits, Turkey was very much opposed to it, that it was found necessary to change the terms and bring them forward in another form. But, surely, if this be so, the House and the Government should be chary indeed of carrying on a prolonged war with Russia, Russia having been willing to accept a proposition made originally by us, and which I believe to be the best for Turkey and for the interests of Europe. If, I say, this be so, was the Government justified in breaking off these negotiations, because that really is the issue which this House is called upon to try? Can they obtain better terms? If the terms are sufficient for Turkey they ought not to ask for better ones. I do not say they may not get better terms. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden) that England and France, if they choose to sacrifice 500,000 men, and to throw away 200,000,000*l.* or 300,000,000*l.* of treasure, may dismember the Russian Empire. But I doubt whether this would give better terms for Turkey—I am sure it would not give better terms for England and France. Now, what has it cost to obtain all this?

And here I must be permitted to say one word with regard to the course taken by those right hon. Gentlemen who have recently taken their seats on this bench, and whose conduct on this question has been the cause of great debate, and of language which I think the state of the case has not wholly justified. I presume it will be admitted that these right hon. Gentlemen at least know the object of the war as well as any other men in this House. I presume, too, that, entertaining as they do a very serious idea of the results of a prolonged war, they are at liberty to come to the conclusion that certain terms, to which they themselves were parties, are sufficient; and if this be the conviction at which they have arrived, surely no Member of this House will say that, because they were Members of a Cabinet some time ago which went into this war, therefore they should be forbidden to endeavour to avert the incalculable calamities which threaten their country, but should be expected to maintain a show of consistency, for which they must sacrifice everything that an honest man would hold dear. Have these men gained anything in popularity with the country, or even with the Members of this House, by the course they have taken?

I am almost ashamed to say anything in the defence of those who are so capable of explaining and defending their own conduct in this matter; but I may be pardoned if I rejoice that men ranking high as statesmen, powerful by their oratory, distinguished by their long services, have separated themselves from that rash, that inexcusable recklessness which, I say, marks the present Government, and are anxious

to deliver their country from the dangers which surround it. My hon. Friends below me—and I am quite sure not one of them will suppose that I speak from the mere wish to oppose them in any way; they are personal friends of mine, and it pains me now to differ from them; but hon. Members seem to think, when they are looking a long way off for the objects to be gained by war, that a man who looks at home is not a friend to his country. Is war the only thing a nation enters upon in which the cost is never to be reckoned? Is it nothing that in twelve months you have sacrificed 20,000 or 30,000 men, who a year ago were your own fellow-citizens, living in your midst, and interested, as you are, in all the social and political occurrences of the day? Is it nothing that, in addition to those lives, a sum of—I am almost afraid to say how much, but 30,000,000*l.* or 40,000,000*l.* will not be beyond the mark—has already been expended? And let the House bear in mind this solemn fact—that the four nations engaged in this war have already lost so many men, that if you were to go from Chelsea to Blackwall, and from Highgate and Hampstead to Norwood, and take every man of a fighting age and put him to death—if you did this you would not sacrifice a larger number of lives than have already been sacrificed in these twelve months of war.

Your own troops, as you know, have suffered, during a Crimean winter, tortures and horrors which the great Florentine hardly imagined when he wrote his immortal epic. Hon. Members are ready, I know, to say, 'Whose fault is that?' But if our loss has been less than that of the French, less than that of the Turks, and less than that of the Russians, it is fair to assume that, whatever mistakes may have been committed by the Government, the loss in the aggregate would, even under other circumstances, have fallen very little short of that which I have attempted to describe. Are these things to be accounted nothing? We have had for twelve years past a gradual reduction of taxation, and there has been an immense improvement in the physical, intellectual, and moral condition of the people of this country; while for the last two years we have commenced a career of reimposing taxes, have had to apply for a loan, and no doubt, if this war goes on, extensive loans are still in prospect.

Hon. Members may think this is nothing. They say it is a 'low' view of the case. But, these things are the foundation of your national greatness, and of your national duration; and you may be following visionary phantoms in all parts of the world while your own country is becoming rotten within, and calamities may be in store for the monarchy and the nation of which now, it appears, you take no heed. Every man connected with trade knows how much trade has suffered, how much profits in every branch of trade—except in contracts arising out of the war—have diminished, how industry is becoming more precarious and the reward for industry less, how the price of food is raised, and how much there is of a growing pressure of all classes, especially upon the poorest of the people—a pressure which by-and-by—not just now, when the popular frenzy is lashed into fury morning after morning by the newspapers—[Murmurs]—but I say by-and-by this discontent will grow rapidly, and you (pointing to the Ministerial bench) who now fancy you are fulfilling the behests of the national will, will find yourselves pointed to as the men who ought to have taught the nation better.

I will not enter into the question of the harvest. That is in the hand of Providence, and may Providence grant that the harvest may be as bountiful as it was last year! But the House must recollect that in 1853, only two years ago, there was the worst harvest that had been known for forty years. Prices were very high in consequence. Last year the harvest was the greatest ever known, yet prices have been scarcely

lower, and there are not wanting men of great information and of sound judgment who look with much alarm to what may come—I trust it may not come—if we should have, in addition to the calamities of war, calamities arising from a scarcity of food, which may be scarcely less destructive of the peace and comfort of the population of this country.

I will ask the House in this state of things whether they are disposed to place implicit confidence in her Majesty's Ministers? On that (the Opposition) side of the House there is not, I believe, much confidence in the Government; and on this side I suspect there are many men who are wishful that at this critical moment the affairs of the country should be under the guidance of men of greater solidity and of better judgment. I will now point out one or two causes which I think show that I am justified in placing no confidence whatever in her Majesty's Government. Take for example what they have been doing with Austria. The noble Lord at the head of the Government has stated to us that it was of European importance that Hungary should be connected with Austria. The noble Lord the Member for the City of London said the other night it was of essential importance that Austria should be preserved as she is—a great conservative Power in the midst of Europe. Well, but at the same time this Government has been urging Austria, month after month, to enter into the same ruinous course which they themselves are disposed to pursue. They know perfectly well that if Austria were to join either with Russia on the one hand, or with the Western Powers on the other, in all human probability this great Empire would no longer remain that 'great conservative Power in the midst of Europe,' but would be stripped on the one side of her Italian provinces, and of Hungary on the other; or, if not stripped of these two portions of the Empire, would be plunged into an interminable anarchy which would prove destructive of her power.

What can be more inconsistent than for Ministers to tell us that they wish Austria to be preserved, and, at the same time, to urge her upon a course which they know perfectly well must end in her disruption, and in the destruction of that which they think essential to the balance of power in Europe? We are told, with regard to our other alliance, that it is a very delicate topic. It is a very delicate and a very important topic; but there is another topic still more delicate and important—namely, the future of this country with regard to that alliance. I think we have before now spent 1,000,000,000*l*. sterling, more or less, for the sake of a French dynasty. At this moment there are French armies in Rome, in Athens, in Gallipoli, in Constantinople, and in the Crimea, and the end of all this, I fear, is not yet. It has been repeatedly stated in this House that the people of France are not themselves enthusiastic in favour of this war. I would fain hope, whatever else may happen, that between the people of England and of France an improved and friendly feeling has grown up. But, as far as the war is concerned, your alliance depends on one life. The present dynasty may be a permanent, but it may be an ephemeral one, and I cannot but think that when men are looking forward to prolonged warfare they should at least take into consideration the ground on which they are standing.

Lord Clarendon has told us, with regard to Russia, that Europe was standing on a mine, and did not know it. I do not know that he is much more acute than other people, but I can fancy that Lord Clarendon, by the blunders of his negotiations and the alliances he has endeavoured to form, has placed this country on a mine far more dangerous and destructive than that upon which he thinks Europe was placed by the colossal power of Russia. There is another point I have to touch upon. To me it was really frightful to hear the noble Lord the Member for London (Lord John Russell) tell the House that we

are not fighting for ourselves, but for Germany. I recollect one passage among many in the noble Lord's speeches upon this point; and, in looking over what has been said by Ministers, one really wonders that they should have allowed anything of the kind to appear in *Hansard*. On the 17th of February last year the noble Lord said,—

'They (England and France) feel that the cause is one, in the first place, of the independence of Turkey. . . . . It is to maintain the independence, not only of Turkey, but of Germany and of all European nations.'—[3 *Hansard*, cxxx. 906.]

['Hear, hear!'] An hon. Member cheers. What a notion a man must have of the duties of the 27,000,000 of people living in these islands if he thinks they ought to come forward as the defenders of the 60,000,000 of people in Germany, that the blood of England is not the property of the people of England, and that the sacred treasure of the bravery, resolution, and unfaltering courage of the people of England is to be squandered in a contest in which the noble Lord says we have no interest, for the preservation of the independence of Germany, and of the integrity, civilization, and something else, of all Europe!

The noble Lord takes a much better view, as I presume many of us do, of things past than of things present. The noble Lord knows that we once did go to war for all Europe, but then we went to war with nearly all Europe, whereas now we are going to war in alliance with France only, except the little State of Sardinia, which we have cajoled or coerced into a course which I believe every friend to the freedom of Italy and to Sardinia will live to regret. All the rest of Europe—Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Prussia, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden—take no part in the war, and yet our Ministers have—what I should call, if I were not in this House, the effrontery and audacity to get up and tell us that they are fighting the battle of all Europe, and that all Europe is leagued with us against the colossal power of Russia. Europe in the last war did, for the most part, unite with us. We went to Spain because we were called to go by the patriot Spaniards, but I think the Duke of Wellington has stated, in his despatches, that if he had known how little assistance would be received from them he would not have recommended even that expedition.

But now, not only has all Europe not united with you, but other countries will not even allow their men to fight with you. You pay the Turks to fight their own battles, you enlist men in Germany to fight the battles of Germany, and the persons engaged in Switzerland and Hamburg in enlisting men for you are looked upon with suspicion by the authorities, and I am not sure that some of them have not even been taken into custody. Why, then, should you pretend that all Europe is leagued against Russia, and that you have authority to fight the battles of all Europe against Russia, when the greater part of Europe is standing by apathetically wondering at the folly you are committing? I would appeal to the noble Lord the Member for the Colonies—I beg his pardon, the Member for London—but he has been in so many different positions lately that it is extremely difficult to identify him. I would appeal to the noble Lord, because, however much I differ from him, I have never yet come to the conclusion that he has not at heart the interest of his country, that he is not capable of appreciating a fair argument when it is laid before him, and that he has not some sense of the responsibility as to the political course he takes, and I would ask him if there be no other world of kingdoms and of nations but that old world of Europe with which the noble Lord is so disposed to entangle this country?

I wish the noble Lord could blot out from his recollection, for a little time, William III, and all the remembrance of what has been called by the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire

(Mr. Disraeli) 'the Dutch conquest,' which is supposed to have enthroned the Whig aristocracy in this country. I would ask the noble Lord to do this for to-night—for an hour—for five minutes. There is a country called the United States of America. Only on Tuesday night the very remarkable circumstance occurred—and I think the House will be of opinion that it is one worth notice—of two of those distinguished men being present and listening to the debates in this House who have occupied the position of President of the United States; a position, I venture to say, not lower in honour and dignity than that of any crowned monarch on the surface of the globe. The United States is precisely the country which is running with us the race of power and of greatness. Its population will, I believe, at the next census exceed the population of the United Kingdom; in its manufactures and general industry it is by far the most formidable rival that the great manufacturers of this country now have to contend with; it has, I suppose, ten steamers for one steamer of this country; its magnificent steamships have crossed the Atlantic in a shorter time than the steamships of this country; the finest vessels which are at this moment performing the voyage between England and the Australian colonies have been built in the United States; therefore, in shipbuilding industry the United States not only compete with, but in some respects even excel, this country. Look at our present position and that of the United States.

May I entreat the attention of this House, for I am not declaiming, I am not making a party attack, I am treating of that which, in my mind, is of vital importance to every family in the kingdom. This year the Chancellor of the Exchequer told you that he must have a sum of 86,000,000*l*. in order to carry on the various departments of your Government, and to defray your vast military expenditure. The United States has at this moment in her Treasury enough, I think, to pay off all her debt. Deduct the whole amount of the expenses of the Government of the United States, not only of the general Government, but also of the thirty independent sovereign States, from the 86,000,000*l*. we are spending, and you will find that at least 70,000,000*l*. will be left, which is, therefore, the sum of taxation that we are paying this year more than the people of the United States.

Some hon. Gentlemen know what it is to run a horse that has been weighted. I heard, the other day, of a horse that won every race in which it started, up to a certain period when it was for the first time weighted. It then lost the race, and it is reported in the annals of the turf that it never won a race afterwards. If that be the case with regard to a horse, it is much more true with regard to a nation. When a nation has gone a step backwards it is difficult to restore it to its position; if another nation has passed it in the race, it is almost impossible for it to regain the ground it has lost. I now speak particularly to hon. Members opposite, for there are, perhaps, more Gentlemen upon that than upon this side of the House in the happy position of owners of vast, productive, beautiful, and, I hope, unencumbered estates in the various parts of the kingdom. We are now about ten days' voyage from the United States, and within ten years we shall probably communicate with that country by telegraph as quickly as we now do with the Crimea. I hope it will be for a much better object. The people of the United States are our people, and there are few families in England which have not friends and relatives connected with or settled in that country. The inducements for men to remain at home and their attachment to the place of their birth are necessarily to some extent weakened by the facility with which they can now travel almost round the world in a few weeks.

Do you believe that when the capital of the greatest banking-house in Lombard-street can be transferred to the United States on a small piece of paper

in one post, that the imposition of 70,000,000*l.* of taxation over and above the taxation of an equal population in the United States will not have the effect of transferring capital from this country to the United States, and, if capital, then trade, population, and all that forms the bone and sinew of this great Empire? I ask hon. Members to remember what fell on a previous evening from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Works. The right hon. Gentleman talked of the war lasting, perhaps, six years with our resources undiminished. Now, nothing is easier than for a Cornish Baronet, possessing I am afraid to say how many thousands a year, a Member of a Cabinet, or for all those who are surrounded with every comfort, to look with the utmost complacency upon the calamities which may befall others not so fortunately situated as themselves. Six years of this war, and our resources undiminished! Why, Sir, six years of this war, at an annual expenditure of 70 000,000*l.*, give 420,000,000*l.* to the side of the United States as against the condition of the people of this country.

Am I, then, talking of trifles? Am I talking to sane men, that it is necessary to bring forward facts like these? I am amazed, when the newspaper press, when public speakers, when Gentlemen on both sides of this House are so ready to listen and to speak upon questions relating to Turkey, to Servia, or to Schamyl, that I cannot get the House of Commons to consider a question so great as the expenditure of 420,000,000*l.*, and when we have to consider if we shall trust that vast issue in the hands of the noble Lords and right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury bench.

I have stated that I have no confidence in the Government, and I will now tell the House another reason for that want of confidence. My hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding, on a previous occasion, treated the right hon. President of the Board of Works very summarily; but I wish to call the attention of the House to what was said by the right hon. Gentleman in 1850, in the debate which then took place upon the foreign policy of the noble Lord now his chief. On that occasion the right hon. Gentleman told the House that the foreign policy of the noble Lord now at the head of the Government had made us hated by every party in every nation in Europe; he said that the noble Lord had excited the disaffected to revolt, and, having brought upon them the vengeance of the Governments under which they lived, had then betrayed them. I do not say that this is true, but I state it upon the authority of a Minister now in the Cabinet of the noble Lord; but, whether true or not, I cannot have confidence in the right hon. Gentleman when sitting in a Cabinet to carry out the foreign policy of the noble Lord.

I will take the case of another Minister, and I do not think that when he speaks he will call my observations undeserved. A most distinguished Member of the Government—the Chancellor of the Exchequer—has been twice elected within a very short period, once before and once since his acceptance of office,—I must say that I do not like to see these changes, when a man one night sits on one bench and another night on another,—on the 8th of February, 1855, the right hon. Gentleman, addressing his constituents at Radnor, said:—

'I am not prepared to give my vote in favour of any change in our policy which would attempt to make England a first-rate military Power. It seems to me that it would be little short of madness to attempt any such gigantic undertaking. It is our true wisdom to limit ourselves to that amount of military force which shall enable us to defend our own shores, and to protect our great dependencies abroad. If we can completely defend our own coasts, it appears to me that the objects of our national policy have been fulfilled.'

And then, as if he had in view the language of the noble Lord at the head of the Government and that of his

colleague the Member for London, he proceeded to say:—

'I wish to see a cessation of that inordinate and senseless desire which has been sometimes expressed of late, almost usurping the functions of Providence, that we should go to almost all parts of the world to redress wrong and to see that right is done.'

I say that the right hon. Gentleman had the language of his colleagues in view, and when he speaks he will no doubt admit that such was the case. For what did the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies say when he addressed the baillies and the enthusiastic citizens of Greenock? He said,—

'It is likewise to be considered, and I trust we shall none of us forget it, that this country holds an important position among the nations of the world—that not once, but many times, she has stood forward to resist oppression, to maintain the independence of weaker nations, to preserve to the general family of nations that freedom, that power of governing themselves, of which others have sought to deprive them. I trust that character will not be forgotten, will not be abandoned by a people which is now stronger in means, which is more populous and more wealthy than it ever has been at any former period. This then, you will agree with me, is not the period to abandon any of those duties towards the world, towards the whole of mankind, which Great Britain has hitherto performed.'

Now let us see what the right hon. Gentleman said, after having accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman made a speech, and it was just after the death of the late Emperor of Russia, and, in referring to the new Emperor, he said,—

'If, however, it should please this mighty Potentate to continue in the course of aggression upon which his father had entered, and if our reasonable hopes of a more pacific policy should be disappointed, then let him know that in England he will find a country prepared to maintain its own rights and the rights of other nations.'

Observe, 'the rights of other nations;' and he goes on,—

'A country which, although its army has been placed in a perilous position, and has had to undergo the rigours of a Russian winter, has its resources unimpaired, has its revenue flourishing, has its trade substantially undiminished, has its spirit unbroken, and will be prepared, in case of necessity, to vindicate its own honour, and to maintain the rights and liberties of Europe.'

I wish the House to observe what a complete change there is in the language of the right hon. Gentleman upon these two occasions. Either of the two opinions which he expressed may be right, but both of them cannot be so, and I confess that when I find that a Gentleman says one thing one day, and a month later, when he comes into office, the exact opposite, I do not think that I can be expected to have that confidence in him as to be willing to entrust him with the vast issues depending on the war.

I will now refer to a colleague of the right hon. Gentleman—one who has also distinguished himself—I mean the First Lord of the Admiralty. That right hon. Gentleman (Sir C. Wood) has said nothing upon the subject of the war, and I have felt that he must entertain great doubts as to its policy; but, not very long ago, he also addressed his constituents, and indulged in very hostile and insulting language towards 'our great and magnanimous ally;' but he, too, has changed his mind; and not long ago he went down by express train to Folkestone or Dover—I forget which—to meet in the most friendly, and probably in the most humble manner, the very potentate whom he had formerly abused.

If I have disposed of these Gentlemen and shown why I can have no confidence in them, are there any better reasons why I should have confidence in those two noble Lords who were the active and restless spirits in the Cabinet

which the noble Lord the Member for London overthrew? I regard those noble Lords as responsible for the policy of this war. I am bound to suppose that they acted in accordance with their conscientious convictions; but, still, the fact of their having embarked in that policy is no reason why I should have confidence in them. But, are those two noble Lords men in whom the House and country ought to place implicit confidence? What of late could be more remarkable than the caprices of the noble Lord the Member for London? When that noble Lord was in the Government of Lord Aberdeen he went to Greenock, I think to Bedford, and certainly to Bristol—and, in fact, he took every opportunity which offered itself of bringing himself before the public; and, with his power of speech, his long experience, and eminent character, did his utmost to stimulate the feelings of the people to a policy which I believe to be destructive, and which I think the majority of this House in calm moments does not believe to have been the wisest which could have been pursued. It certainly appears to me to be unjustifiable that, while Lord Aberdeen was honestly endeavouring to bring the negotiations to a peaceful conclusion, the noble Lord was taking a course which rendered statesmanship valueless in conducting the foreign policy of the nation. The noble Lord, however, at last brought his conduct to a climax. The hon. and learned Member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck) came forward as a little David with sling and stone—weapons which he did not even use, but at the sight of which the Whig Goliah went howling and vanquished to the back benches.

I am afraid, Sir, to trust myself to speak of the conduct of the noble Lord on that occasion. I presume that we shall have to wait for the advent of that Somersetshire historian, whose coming the noble Lord expects, before we know whether his conduct on that occasion was, what some persons still call it, treachery to his chief, or whether it arose from that description of moral cowardice which in every man is the death of all true statesmanship. But in the year 1852 the noble Lord the Member for London gave me a strong reason why I should feel no confidence in his present chief. The House will remember that he then ejected the present First Minister under whom he now serves from the Cabinet of which he himself was then the head, and in the explanation which he made to the House, he told us that men like Lord Grey and Lord Melbourne, men of age, of authority, and experience, had been able in some degree to control his noble Friend, but, that he being younger than the noble Lord, and having been a shorter time on the political stage, had found it difficult to control him. The description which the noble Lord might give of his colleague is a little like that which we occasionally see given of a runaway horse—that he got the bit between his teeth, and there was no holding him.

The noble Lord the Member for London was the captain of the State vessel, and the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton was the mate. But how is it now? The noble Lord the Member for the City of London has accepted the position of mate in the most perilous times, in the most tempestuous weather, and he goes to sea with no chart on a most dangerous and interminable voyage, and with the very reckless captain whom he would not trust as mate. Sir, the noble Lord the Member for London has made a defence of his conduct at the Conferences at Vienna. I am willing to give him credit that he did then honestly intend peace; but I do think that when he goes again, and on such a journey, he will do well to leave some of his historic knowledge behind him. They were indeed historic fancies. There is nothing to me so out of place as the comparison which the noble Lord made between the limitation of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea and the destruction of Dunkirk, or between the condition of the Black Sea

and that of the lakes of North America. The noble Lord can never have heard of the Falls of Niagara. If there were Falls like them between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean the cases would be somewhat similar, for the Russian fleet in the Black Sea would not then be exposed to the assaults of the vast navies of England or France. When I allude to this subject, I am reminded of that Welshman whom Shakspeare immortalised, who found some analogy between a river in Macedon and a river in Monmouth. He knew the name of the river in Monmouth, and he did not know the name of the river in Macedon, but he insisted upon the analogy between them because there were salmon in both.

Well, Sir, I now come to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. I do not complain that he is at the head of the Government. The noble Lord the Member for the City of London had thrown everything into such inextricable and unlooked-for confusion that any one next door to him must necessarily occupy the place. But I cannot have confidence in the noble Viscount, because I cannot but recollect that in 1850 he received the condemnation of his foreign policy in the other House of Parliament; and in a speech which I shall never forget, the last and one of the best ever delivered by the greatest statesman of the time, he received a similar condemnation, and the noble Viscount only escaped condemnation by a direct vote of this House by the energetic defence of the noble Lord the Member for the City of London, and by the stress laid upon many Members on this side of the House. But only six weeks after this the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) presented to the noble Viscount a letter from his Sovereign, which I cannot but think must have cost him much pain, and to which I will not refer further, except to say that I do not know how it is possible, if the contents of that letter were true, that either the noble Lord or the House can be called upon to place implicit confidence in the noble Lord the leader of the Government.

I have observed the noble Viscount's conduct ever since I have had the honour of a seat in this House, and the noble Viscount will excuse me if I state the reason why I have often opposed him. The reason is, that the noble Viscount treats all these questions, and the House itself, with such a want of seriousness that it has appeared to me that he has no serious, or sufficiently serious, conviction of the important business that so constantly comes before this House. I regard the noble Viscount as a man who has experience, but who with experience has not gained wisdom—as a man who has age, but who, with age, has not the gravity of age, and who, now occupying the highest seat of power, has—and I say it with pain—not appeared influenced by a due sense of the responsibility that belongs to that elevated position.

We are now in the hands of these two noble Lords. They are the authors of the war. It lies between them that peace was not made at Vienna upon some proper terms. And whatever disasters may be in store for this country or for Europe, they will lie at the doors of these noble Lords. Their influence in the Cabinet must be supreme; their influence in this House is necessarily great; and their influence with the country is greater than that of any other two statesmen now upon the stage of political life in England. They have carried on the war. They have, however, not yet crippled Russia, although it is generally admitted that they have almost destroyed Turkey. They have not yet saved Europe in its independence and civilization,—they have only succeeded in convulsing it. They have not added to the honour and renown of England, but they have placed the honour and renown of this country in peril. The country has been, I am afraid, the sport of their ancient rivalry, and I should be very sorry if it should be the victim of the policy which they have so long advocated.

There is only one other point upon

which I will trouble the House, if it will give me its attention. These Ministers — the right hon. Member for Southwark, the Commissioner of the Board of Works, especially, and evidently the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I am afraid many other Members of this House—seem to think little of taxes. Some Members of this House seem to have no patience with me if I speak of the cost of the war; but I am obliged to ask its attention to this point. I recollect reading in the life of Necker, that an aristocratic lady came to him when he was Finance Minister of Louis XVI, and asked him to give her 1,000 crowns from the public treasury—not an unusual demand in those days. Necker refused to give the money. The lady started with astonishment — she had an eye to the vast funds of the State, and she asked, 'What can 1,000 crowns be to the King?' Necker's answer was, 'Madam! 1,000 crowns are the taxes of a whole village!'

I ask hon. Gentlemen what are the taxes of a whole village, and what they mean? They mean bareness of furniture, of clothing, and of the table in many a cottage in Lancashire, in Suffolk, and in Dorsetshire. They mean an absence of medical attendance for a sick wife, an absence of the school pence of three or four little children—hopeless toil to the father of a family, penury through his life, a cheerless old age, and, if I may quote the language of a poet of humble life, at last—'the little bell tolled hastily for the pauper's funeral.' That is what taxes mean. The hon. Member for Dorsetshire spoke the other night in a manner rather flippant and hardly respectful to some of us on this question. But the labourers of Dorsetshire as well as the weavers and spinners of Lancashire are toiling, and must toil harder, longer, and with smaller remuneration for every single 100*l*. that you extract in taxes from the people in excess of what is necessary for the just requirements of the Exchequer of the country. I hope I may be permitted to treat the question on this ground, and I ask the House to recollect that when you strike down the children in the cottage you attack also the children in the palace. If you darken the lives and destroy the hopes of the humble dwellers of the country, you also darken the prospects of those children the offspring of your Queen, in whom are bound up so much of the interests and so much of the hopes of the people of this country. If I defend, therefore, the interests of the people on this point, I do not the less defend the permanence of the dignity of the Crown.

We on this bench are not willing to place ourselves alongside of noble Lords who are for carrying on this war with no definite object and for an indefinite period, but are ready to take our chance of the verdict of posterity whether they or we more deserve the character of statesmen in the course we have taken on this question. The House must know that the people are misled and bewildered, and that if every man in this House, who doubts the policy that is being pursued, would boldly say so in this House and out of it, it would not be in the power of the press to mislead the people as it has done for the last twelve months. If they are thus misled and bewildered, is it not the duty of this House to speak with the voice of authority in this hour of peril? We are the depositaries of the power and the guardians of the interests of a great nation and of an ancient monarchy. Why should we not fully measure our responsibility? Why should we not disregard the small-minded ambition that struggles for place? and why should we not, by a faithful, just, and earnest policy, restore, as I believe we may, tranquillity to Europe and prosperity to the country so dear to us?

LETTER OF JOHN BRIGHT

TO ABSALOM WATKIN

ON THE RUSSIAN WAR.

[This letter was originally published with notes containing extracts from those authorities which confirmed the writer's views. The text of these notes has been omitted, but the references have been retained. It has been thought desirable to reprint this letter, as explaining the policy which Mr. Bright thought it his duty to recommend — a policy which was as wise and just as it was unfortunately unpopular.—J. E. T. R.]

[Mr. Absalom Watkin, of Manchester, having invited Mr. Bright to a meeting about to be held in that city on behalf of the Patriotic Fund, and having stated that in his opinion the present war was justified by the authority of *Vattel*, Mr. Bright replied in the subjoined letter.]

I THINK, on further consideration, you will perceive that the meeting on Thursday next would be a most improper occasion for a discussion as to the justice of the war. Just or unjust, the war is a fact, and the men whose lives are miserably thrown away in it have clearly a claim upon the country, and especially upon those who, by the expression of opinions favourable to the war, have made themselves responsible for it. I cannot, therefore, for a moment appear to discourage the liberality of those who believe the war to be just, and whose utmost generosity, in my opinion, will make but a wretched return for the ruin they have brought upon hundreds of families.

With regard to the war itself, I am not surprised at the difference between your opinion and mine, if you decide a question of this nature by an appeal to *Vattel*. The 'law of nations' is not my law, and at best it is a code full of confusion and contradictions, having its foundation on custom, and not on a higher morality; and on custom which has always been determined by the will of the strongest. It may be a question of some interest whether the first crusade was in accordance with the law and principles of *Vattel;* but whether the first crusade was just, and whether the policy of the crusades was a wise policy, is a totally different question. I have no doubt that the American war was a just war according to the principles laid down by writers on the 'law

of nations,' and yet no man in his senses in this country will now say that the policy of George III towards the American colonies was a wise policy, or that war a righteous war. The French war, too, was doubtless just according to the same authorities; for there were fears and anticipated dangers to be combatted, and law and order to be sustained in Europe; and yet few intelligent men now believe the French war to have been either necessary or just. You must excuse me if I refuse altogether to pin my faith upon *Vattel*. There have been writers on international law who have attempted to show that private assassination and the poisoning of wells were justifiable in war; and perhaps it would be difficult to demonstrate wherein these horrors differ from some of the practices which are now in vogue. I will not ask you to mould your opinion on these points by such writers, nor shall I submit my judgment to that of *Vattel*.

The question of this present war is in two parts—first, was it necessary for us to interfere by arms in a dispute between the Russians and the Turks; and secondly, having determined to interfere, under certain circumstances, why was not the whole question terminated when Russia accepted the Vienna note? The seat of war is three thousand miles away from us. We had not been attacked—not even insulted in any way. Two independent Governments had a dispute, and we thrust ourselves into the quarrel. That there was some ground for the dispute is admitted by the four Powers in the proposition of the Vienna note[1]. But for the English Minister at Constantinople and the Cabinet at home, the dispute would have settled itself, and the last note of Prince Menchikoff would have been accepted, and no human being can point out any material difference between that note and the Vienna note, afterwards agreed upon and recommended by the Governments of England, France, Austria, and Prussia. But our Government would not allow the dispute to be settled. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe held private interviews with the Sultan—did his utmost to alarm him—insisted on his rejection of all terms of accommodation with Russia, and promised him the armed assistance of England if war should arise[2].

The Turks rejected the Russian note, and the Russians crossed the Pruth, occupying the Principalities as a 'material guarantee.' I do not defend this act of Russia: it has always appeared to me impolitic and immoral; but I think it likely it could be well defended out of *Vattel*, and it is at least as justifiable as the conduct of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston in 1850, when they sent ten or twelve ships of war to the Piræus, menacing the town with a bombardment if the dishonest pecuniary claims made by Don Pacifico were not at once satisfied[3].

But the passage of the Pruth was declared by England and France and Turkey not to be a *casus belli*. Negotiations were commenced at Vienna, and the celebrated Vienna note was drawn up. This note had its origin in Paris[4], was agreed to by the Conference

[1] Colonel Rose to Lord John Russell, March 7, 1853—Blue Book, part i. p. 87. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to the Earl of Clarendon, April 9 and May 22, 1853—Ibid. part i. pp. 127 and 235. Lord John Russell to Sir G. H. Seymour, February 9, 1853—Eastern Papers, part v. p. 8. Earl of Clarendon to Sir G. H. Seymour, April 5, 1853—Ibid. part v. p. 22. Lord Carlisle's Diary in Turkish and Greek Waters, p. 181.

[2] Lord Stratford to the Earl of Clarendon, May 19, 1853. See, however, a despatch of May 10—Blue Book, part i. p. 213.

[3] Count Nesselrode to Baron Brunnow, February, 1850.

[4] Earl of Westmoreland to Lord Clarendon, July 25, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 19.

at Vienna, ratified and approved by the Cabinets of Paris and London[1], and pronounced by all these authorities to be such as would satisfy the honour of Russia, and at the same time be compatible with the 'independence and integrity' of Turkey and the honour of the Sultan. Russia accepted this note at once[2],—accepted it, I believe, by telegraph, even before the precise words of it had been received in St. Petersburgh[3]. Everybody thought the question now settled; a Cabinet Minister assured me we should never hear another word about it; 'the whole thing is at an end,' he said, and so it appeared for a moment. But the Turk refused the note which had been drawn up by his own arbitrators, and which Russia had accepted[4]. And what did the Ministers say then, and what did their organ, the *Times*, say? They said it was merely a difference about words; it was a pity the Turk made any difficulty, but it would soon be settled[5]. But it was not settled, and why not? It is said that the Russian Government put an improper construction on the Vienna note. But it is unfortunate for those who say this, that the Turk placed precisely the same construction upon it; and further, it is upon record that the French Government advised the Russian Government to accept it, on the ground that 'its general sense differed in nothing from the sense of the proposition of Prince Menchikoff[6].' It is, however, easy to see why the Russian Government should, when the Turks refused the award of their own arbitrators, re-state its original claim, that it might not be damaged by whatever concession it had made in accepting the award; and this is evidently the explanation of the document issued by Count Nesselrode, and about which so much has been said. But, after this, the Emperor of Russia spoke to Lord Westmoreland on the subject at Olmütz, and expressed his readiness to accept the Vienna note, with any clause which the Conference might add to it, explaining and restricting its meaning[7]; and he urged that this should be done at once, as he was anxious that his troops should re-cross the Pruth before winter[8]. It was in this very week that the Turks summoned a grand council, and, contrary to the advice of England and France, determined on a declaration of war[9].

Now, observe the course taken by

[1] Earl of Clarendon to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, August 2, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 27. Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon, August 4, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 37.

[2] Sir G. H. Seymour to the Earl of Clarendon, August 5, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 43. Count Nesselrode, August 6, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 46.

[3] Sir G. H. Seymour to Lord Clarendon, August 12, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 50. Count Nesselrode to Baron Meyendorff, September 7, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 101.

[4] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe to the Earl of Clarendon, August 13, 1853—Blue Book, part iv. p. 69. Lord Stratford to the Earl of Clarendon, August 14, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 71.

[5] Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon, from Paris, September 2, 1853—Blue Book, part iv. p. 87. Lord Clarendon to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, September 10, 1853—Ibid. part iv. p. 95. The *Times*, September 17, 1853.

[6] Earl of Clarendon to the Earl of Westmoreland, July 25, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 1. Count Nesselrode's Memorandum of March 2, 1854, in the *Journal des Débats*.

[7] Lord Westmoreland to Lord Clarendon, September 28, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 129. Lord Cowley to Lord Clarendon, October 4, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 131. Lord Clarendon to Lord Cowley, October 7, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 140. Lord Clarendon to Lord A. Loftus—Ibid. part ii. p. 132.

[8] Earl of Westmoreland, September 14, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 106.

[9] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, September 26, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. p. 130. M. Drouyn de Lhuys to Count Walewski, October 4, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 136.

our Government. They agreed to the Vienna note; not fewer than five Members of this Cabinet have filled the office of Foreign Secretary, and therefore may be supposed capable of comprehending its meaning: it was a note drawn up by the friends of Turkey, and by arbitrators self-constituted on behalf of Turkey; they urged its acceptance on the Russian Government, and the Russian Government accepted it; there was then a dispute about its precise meaning, and Russia agreed, and even proposed that the arbitrators at Vienna should amend it, by explaining it, and limiting its meaning, so that no question of its intention should henceforth exist. But, the Turks having rejected it, our Government turned round, and declared the Vienna note, their own note, entirely inadmissible, and defended the conduct of the Turks in having rejected it. The Turks declared war, against the advice of the English and French Governments[1] —so, at least, it appears from the Blue Books; but the moment war was declared by Turkey, our Government openly applauded it. England, then, was committed to the war. She had promised armed assistance to Turkey—a country without government[2], and whose administration was at the mercy of contending factions; and incapable of fixing a policy for herself, she allowed herself to be dragged on by the current of events at Constantinople. She 'drifted,' as Lord Clarendon said, exactly describing his own position, into the war, apparently without rudder and without compass.

The whole policy of our Government in this matter is marked with an imbecility perhaps without example. I will not say they intended a war from the first, though there are not wanting many evidences that war was the object of at least a section of the Cabinet. A distinguished Member of the House of Commons said to a friend of mine, immediately after the accession of the present Government to office, 'You have a war Ministry, and you will have a war.' But I leave this question to point out the disgraceful feebleness of the Cabinet, if I am to absolve them from the guilt of having sought occasion for war. They promised the Turk armed assistance on conditions, or without conditions. They, in concert with France, Austria, and Prussia, took the original dispute out of the hands of Russia and Turkey, and formed themselves into a court of arbitration in the interests of Turkey; they made an award, which they declared to be safe and honourable for both parties; this award was accepted by Russia and rejected by Turkey; and they then turned round upon their own award, declared it to be 'totally inadmissible,' and made war upon the very country whose Government, at their suggestion and urgent recommendation, had frankly accepted it. At this moment England is engaged in a murderous warfare with Russia, although the Russian Government accepted her own terms of peace, and has been willing to accept them in the sense of England's own interpretation of them ever since they were offered; and at the same time England is allied with Turkey, whose Government rejected the award of England, and who entered into the war in opposition to the advice of England. Surely, when the Vienna note was accepted by Russia, the Turks should have been prevented from going to war, or should have been allowed to go to war at their own risk.

I have said nothing here of the fact

[1] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, September 20, 1853—Blue Book, part ii. pp. 149, 151. Lord Clarendon, October 24, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 131. Lord Stratford, November 17, 1853—Ibid. part ii. pp. 271, 281. Lord Stratford—Ibid. part ii. p. 288. Lord Clarendon to Lord Stratford, November 8, 1853—Ibid. part ii. p. 219.

[2] Lord Clarendon to Lord Stratford—Blue Book, part i. pp. 81, 82. Lord Stratford to M. E. Pisani, June 22, 1853—Ibid. part i. p 383. The same to the same, July 4—Ibid. part i. pp. 383, 384.

that all these troubles have sprung out of the demands made by France upon the Turkish Government, and urged in language more insulting than any which has been shown to have been used by Prince Menchikoff[1]. I have said nothing of the diplomatic war which has been raging for many years past in Constantinople, and in which England has been behind no other Power in attempting to subject the Porte to foreign influences[2]. I have said nothing of the abundant evidence there is that we are not only at war with Russia, but with all the Christian population of the Turkish Empire, and that we are building up our Eastern policy on a false foundation—namely, on the perpetual maintenance of the most immoral and filthy of all despotisms over one of the fairest portions of the earth which it has desolated, and over a population it has degraded but has not been able to destroy. I have said nothing of the wretched delusion that we are fighting for civilization in supporting the Turk against the Russian and against the subject Christian population of Turkey. I have said nothing about our pretended sacrifices for freedom in this war, in which our great and now dominant ally is a monarch who, last in Europe, struck down a free constitution, and dispersed by military violence a national Representative Assembly.

My doctrine would have been non-intervention in this case. The danger of the Russian power was a phantom[3]; the necessity of permanently upholding the Mahometan rule in Europe is an absurdity. Our love for civilization, when we subject the Greeks and Christians to the Turks, is a sham; and our sacrifices for freedom, when working out the behests of the Emperor of the French and coaxing Austria to help us, is a pitiful imposture. The evils of non-intervention were remote and vague, and could neither be weighed nor described in any accurate terms. The good we can judge something of already, by estimating the cost of a contrary policy. And what is that cost? War in the north and south of Europe, threatening to involve every country of Europe. Many, perhaps fifty millions sterling, in the course of expenditure by this country alone, to be raised from the taxes of a people whose extrication from ignorance and poverty can only be hoped for from the continuance of peace. The disturbance of trade throughout the world, the derangement of monetary affairs, and difficulties and ruin to thousands of families. Another year of high prices of food, notwithstanding a full harvest in England, chiefly because war interferes with imports, and we have declared our principal foreign food-growers to be our enemies. The loss of human life to an enormous extent. Many thousands of our own countrymen have already perished of pestilence and in the field; and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of English families will be plunged into sorrow, as a part of the penalty to be paid for the folly of the nation and its rulers.

When the time comes for the 'inquisition for blood,' who shall answer for these things? You have read the tidings from the Crimea; you have, perhaps, shuddered at the slaughter; you remember the terrific picture—I speak not of the battle, and the charge, and the tumultuous excitement of the conflict, but of the field after the battle—Russians, in their frenzy or their terror, shooting Englishmen who would have offered them water to quench their

[1] Col. Rose to the Earl of Malmesbury, November 20, 1852—Blue Book, part i. p. 49. Lord J. Russell to Lord Cowley, January 28, 1853—Ibid. part i. p. 67.

[2] Blue Book—Correspondence respecting the Condition of Protestants in Turkey, 1841–51, pp. 5–8.

[3] 'There never has been a great State whose power for external aggression has been more overrated than Russia. She may be impregnable within her own boundaries, BUT SHE IS NEARLY POWERLESS FOR ANY PURPOSE OF OFFENCE.'—*Lord Palmerston, in the House of Commons*, 1853.

agony of thirst; Englishmen, in crowds, rifling the pockets of the men they had slain or wounded, taking their few shillings or roubles, and discovering *among the plunder of the stiffening* corpses images of the 'Virgin and the Child.' You have read this, and your imagination has followed the fearful details. This is war,—every crime which human nature can commit or imagine, every horror it can perpetrate or suffer; and this it is which our Christian Government recklessly plunges into, and which so many of our countrymen at this moment think it patriotic to applaud! You must excuse me if I cannot go with you. I will have no part in this terrible crime. My hands shall be unstained with the blood which is being shed. The necessity of maintaining themselves in office may influence an administration; delusions may mislead a people; *Vattel* may afford you a law and a defence; but no respect for men who form a Government, no regard I have for 'going with the stream,' and no fear of being deemed wanting in patriotism, shall influence me in favour of a policy which, in my conscience, I believe to be as criminal before God as it is destructive of the true interest of my country.

I have only to ask you to forgive me for writing so long a letter. You have forced it from me, and I would not have written it did I not so much appreciate your sincerity and your good intentions towards me.

Believe me to be,

Very sincerely yours,

JOHN BRIGHT.

October 29.

REFORM.

I.

BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 27, 1858.

[In the autumn of the year 1858, Mr. Bright, having recovered from a serious illness which had compelled his absence from the House of Commons during the sessions of 1856 and 1857, visited some of the principal towns in Great Britain, and made several important speeches on Parliamentary Reform. In the spring of the next year Lord Derby introduced his scheme. It was rejected, and a dissolution followed, which put Lord Palmerston at the head of affairs. During his life the question slept. On Lord Russell's accession to office in the latter part of the year 1865 the question was revived, and the Bill of 1866 was produced. This was lost, through a coalition of the Tories and the 'Adullamites,' and Lord Derby came into office again. In 1867 a Reform Bill was carried.]

If I exhibit embarrassment in rising to address you, I must ask for your forbearance, for, in truth, as I cast my eyes over this great assembly, I feel myself almost bewildered and oppressed with a consciousness of my incapacity to fulfil properly the duty which devolves upon me to-night. It is now nearly three years since I was permitted, and, indeed, since I was able, to stand upon any public platform to address any public meeting of my countrymen; and during that period I have passed through a new and a great experience. From apparent health I have been brought down to a condition of weakness exceeding the weakness of a little child, in which I could neither read nor write, nor converse for more than a few minutes without distress and without peril; and from that condition, by degrees so fine as to be imperceptible even to myself, I have been restored to the comparative health in which you now behold me. In remembrance of all this, is it wrong in me to acknowledge here, in the presence of you all, with reverent and thankful heart, the signal favour which has been extended to me by the great Supreme? Is it wrong that I should take this opportunity of expressing the gratitude which I feel to all classes of my countrymen for the numberless kindnesses which I have received from them during this period—from those high in rank and abounding in wealth and influence, to the dweller on one of our Lancashire moors, who sent me a most kind message to say that he believed where he lived was the healthiest spot in England, and that if I would come and take up my abode with him for a time, though his means were limited and his dwelling humble, he would contrive to let me have a room to myself? I say, looking back to all this, that if I have ever done anything for my countrymen, or for their

Prime Minister, introduced a Reform Bill, and afterwards, in the Government of Lord Aberdeen, Lord J. Russell introduced another Reform Bill, and the least said of these two Bills, especially of the latter, the better. The Government which has recently been overthrown pledged itself to the country and the House of Commons to bring in a Reform Bill, but at the time when it came to an unexpected, but a not undeserved end, no Bill had been prepared, so that we knew nothing of the particulars of which it was to be composed. We have now a Government under the chieftainship of Lord Derby, who, during his short term of office in 1852, stated, if I remember right, that one of the chief objects of his Government would be to stem the tide of democracy. Now, it may be that Lord Derby has entirely changed his mind, that he is as much converted to Parliamentary Reform as Sir R. Peel, in 1846, was converted to Corn-law repeal. If he is so converted, then our question may be in good hands, but if he is not (and he has never yet acknowledged his conversion), then I think it is but reasonable of us to view his course with some suspicion, and to look upon the position of the question in his hands with some alarm. All parties now pretend to be in love with the question of Reform, but still they do not tell us much about it. They remind me, in the few speeches which they have made upon the question, of the condition of that deplorable Atlantic cable, of which I read the other day in the newspapers, that 'the currents were visible, but the signals were wholly indistinct.'

But having admitted that Parliamentary Reform is necessary, they thereby admit that the present House of Commons does not satisfactorily represent the nation, and it is one step in advance to receive that admission from all those persons, from among whom it has hitherto been supposed that Government could alone be formed in this country. Now, I do not believe that the Parliament, as at present constituted, does fairly represent the nation, and I think it is capable of most distinct proof that it does not. Before I proceed to figures, I will mention one or two general proofs of that assertion. In the year 1846, when the great question of the repeal of the Corn-laws was under discussion, it required something like an earthquake to obtain for the people the right to buy their bread in the world's markets; it required a famine in Ireland, which from 1845 to 1851 lessened the population of that country by 3,000,000; it required the conversion of a great Minister, the break-up of a great party, the 'endangering of the Constitution,' and all those mysterious evils which official statesmen discovered when the poor artisan of Birmingham or Manchester, or the poor half-starved farm-labourer, asked this only, that where bread could be had best and cheapest in return for his labour, he might be permitted to buy it. But coming down to 1852, when Lord Derby was in office, he dissolved the Parliament, and the great question proposed to the constituencies was Protection. Parliament re-assembled, and Protection and Lord Derby were defeated by a majority of nineteen; but when you had only a majority of nineteen in the House of Commons against the re-establishment of Protection, nineteen-twentieths of the people of England were determined that they never would have anything of the sort again.

Take again the questions which affect the Established Church. Probably many persons in this meeting are not aware that, according to the return of the Registrar-General, only one-third of the people of this country have any connection with the Established Church. In Scotland, one-third only of the population are connected with the Establishment; in Ireland, five out of six, in Wales, eight out of ten, have no connection at all with it. And yet the Established Church is paramount in both Houses. If the House of Commons fairly represented all the people of the United Kingdom, the Established

Church (it is as a political institution that I speak of it, I say nothing of it as a religious institution) would be much more modest, and we should probably get some changes much more readily than we have ever got any before.

Again, you are aware, probably, that up to 1853, if a man received landed property by inheritance, if it were left to him by will, or came to him as heir-at-law, it paid no legacy duty—I speak of freehold property. In 1853, Mr. Gladstone, by an effort which was considered superhuman, prevailed upon the House of Commons to pass a law to impose a succession-tax, as it was called, or a legacy-duty on real property. I will tell you how they did it. You know that if a man in Birmingham comes into possession of leasehold houses, or machinery, or shares in the North-Western Railway, or shipping, or any other property not called real property—though, by the way, when a man gets hold of it, it is surprising how real he finds it—if he be no relation to the person who left it to him, he has to pay a legacy-duty of ten per cent., and a different degree of per-centage according to the degree of relationship in which he may stand to the testator. In the case of land—the best of all property, with regard to its durability and certainty, for a man to have left to him or to possess—the law is of a different kind. A friend of mine, a Member of the House of Commons, was fortunate enough to have left to him by a person who was in no way related to him a landed estate of about 700*l*. a-year. This was worth in the market thirty years' purchase, or 21,000*l*. There was timber on the estate to the value of 11,000*l*., which, added to 21,000*l*., made the whole bequest 32,000*l*. If it had been leasehold houses, or stock-in-trade, or machinery, or shares, or shipping, or in the funds, my friend would have had to pay 10*l*. per cent. on it, that is to say, 3,200*l*. But what did he pay? The calculation was this:—My friend is of a certain age—I do not know what, and it is not material; the tax-gatherer or the people at Somerset House look into a table, which shows the probable length of life of a man of that particular age, and instead of paying 10*l*. per cent. on 32,000*l*., he is taxed upon the annual income of the estate multiplied by the number of years which according to the tables he may be expected to live. It ended in this way, that instead of paying 3,200*l*. to the State, to bear your burdens and to pay for your wars, he paid 700*l*., or rather less than one-quarter of that sum. Do you think that if the House of Commons fairly represented the lawyers, merchants, manufacturers, shopkeepers, artisans, and all the rest of the population, such an Act as that could have passed that House, or that if it had existed it could continue to exist for a single session?

I could show you inequalities as great and scandalous in the manner in which the income-tax, so grievously felt by owners of certain property in Birmingham, is imposed and presses upon the owners of the soil and those engaged in professions and trades chiefly carried on in towns, but I will not enter into that matter. Your own experience must have shown you how unequal that tax is. You know how entirely every Government has swept aside all proposals to make it more equal and just.

And now we come to the question of figures. I will not trouble you with a heap of statistics which you cannot remember, but will give you as a proof one or two cases. Take the greatest county in England. Yorkshire shows you an existing inequality which is absolutely fatal to all fair representation. There are in Yorkshire 10 small boroughs which return to Parliament 16 Members—there are other 8 boroughs in Yorkshire whose Members altogether are 14. Now, the 10 boroughs returning the 16 Members have not more than a population of 80,000, while the 8 boroughs with the 14 Members have a population of 620,000. Now, whether

you take the amount of population, the number of houses, the sum at which they are rated to the income-tax, or the number of electors, the proportion is in the same way,—the large boroughs with the smaller number of Members have seven times the population, seven times the number of houses, seven times the amount of income-tax to pay, and seven times the number of electors. I must ask your attention to one other comparison, and it relates to your own town. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer, you know, represents the county of Bucks. That county has a population of 164,000, which is not much more than half the population of Birmingham, and yet, Bucks with its boroughs has not less than 11 Members in the House of Commons. 164,000 persons in Bucks return 11 Members, while Birmingham, with not less than 250,000, and probably much more, only returns two Members. I will give you another illustration, which refers to your own town. In Dorsetshire, Devonshire, and Wiltshire there are 22 boroughs, which return 34 Members to Parliament. Compare the population and political power of those 22 boroughs, returning 34 Members to Parliament, with the population and political power of Birmingham. You have nearly twice the population, but you have only two Members to represent you in Parliament.

I could furnish you with pages of illustrations of this kind to show you that our whole system of representation is unequal and dishonest. But one more proof only, and then I will quit the figures, for I think the case will be sufficiently clear. There are in the House of Commons at present 330 Members (more than half the House) whose whole number of constituents do not amount to more than 180,000, and there are at the same time in Parliament 24 Members, whose constituents are upwards of 200,000 in number, and, while the constituents of 330 Members are assessed to the property-tax at 15,000,000*l*., the constituents of the 24 Members are assessed to the same tax at more than 24,000,000*l*. There is, besides, this great significant fact, that wherever you go in Great Britain or Ireland, five out of every six men you meet have no vote. The Reform Bill, which I am not about to depreciate, since I know what it cost to get it, and I know something of what it has done —was so drawn as purposely to exclude from the list of electors the great body of the working classes of this kingdom. But supposing that out of the 6,000,000 of grown-up men in the United Kingdom 1,000,000 had the suffrage, as is now the case, and supposing that 1,000,000 returned the House of Commons by a fair distribution of Members according to numbers, there would, in all probability, be a fair representation of the opinions of the 6,000,000, because the opinions of the 1,000,000 would to a considerable extent reflect and represent the opinions of their fellow-countrymen. But that is not the case. The law has selected 1,000,000 to be the electors of Members of Parliament, but, having got that 1,000,000, it has contrived—partly by accident it may be, but very much by intention—that the political power of the majority of that 1,000,000 is frittered away, is fraudulently disposed of and destroyed by the manner in which Members are distributed among the 1,000,000 electors composing the electoral body. Now, I wish to ask this meeting – and let us try to take a judicial and dispassionate view of the question when we talk of Reform—What is it that we really want? I hold it to be this—that we want to substitute a real and honest representation of the people for that fraudulent thing which we call a representation now.

But there is a very serious question to be decided before we can almost take a step. When you are about to reform the House of Commons, are your eyes to be turned to the House of Peers, or to the great body of the nation? The House of Peers, as you know, does not travel very fast—even what is called a Parliamentary train is too fast for its

nerves; in fact, it never travels at all unless somebody shoves it. If any man proposes to reform the House of Commons just so much as and no more than will allow it to keep pace with the wishes of the House of Lords, I would ask him not to take any trouble in the matter, but just to leave it exactly where it is. If you want it to represent the nation, then it is another question; and, having come to that conclusion, if we have come to it, there is no great mystery, I think, as to the manner in which it can be brought about. The question between the Peers and the people is one which cannot be evaded. It is the great difficulty in the way of our friends at head-quarters who are for Reform, but do not know how to meet it. It was the difficulty which Lord John Russell felt. Lord John Russell—I believe you may take my word for it—has probably, from association, from tradition, from his own reading and study, and from his own just and honest sympathies, a more friendly feeling towards this question of Parliamentary Reform than any other man of his order as a statesman. But, having said this, I must also say—what he, too, would say if he thought it prudent to tell all he knew—that this is the great difficulty with him—How can I reconcile a free representation of the people in the House of Commons with the inevitable disposition which rests in a hereditary House of Peers? Now, we must decide this question. Choose you this day whom you will serve. If the Peers are to be your masters, as they boast that their ancestors were the conquerors of yours, serve them. But if you will serve only the laws, the laws of your country, the laws in making which you have been consulted, you may go on straight to discuss this great question of Parliamentary Reform.

I am not going to attack the House of Lords. Some people tell us that the House of Lords has in its time done great things for freedom. It may be so, though I have not been so successful in finding out how or when, as some people have been. At least since 1690, or thereabouts, when the Peers became the dominant power in this country, I am scarcely able to discover one single measure important to human or English freedom which has come from the voluntary consent and good-will of their House. And, really, how should it? You know what a Peer is. He is one of those fortunate individuals who are described as coming into the world 'with a silver spoon in their mouths.' Or, to use the more polished and elaborate phraseology of the poet, it may be said of him—

> 'Fortune came smiling to his youth and woo'd it,
> And purpled greatness met his ripened years.'

When he is a boy, among his brothers and sisters he is pre-eminent: he is the eldest son; he will be 'My Lord;' this fine mansion, this beautiful park, these countless farms, this vast political influence, will one day centre on this innocent boy. The servants know it, and pay him greater deference on account of it. He grows up and goes to school and college; his future position is known; he has no great incitement to work hard, because whatever he does it is very difficult for him to improve his fortune in any way. When he leaves college he has a secure position ready-made for him, and there seems to be no reason why he should follow ardently any of those occupations which make men great among their fellow-men. He takes his seat in the House of Peers; whatever be his character, whatever his intellect, whatever his previous life, whether he be in England or ten thousand miles away, be he tottering down the steep of age, or be he passing through the imbecility of second childhood, yet by means of that charming contrivance—made only for Peers—vote by proxy, he gives his vote for or against, and, unfortunately, too often against, all those great measures on which you and the country have set your hearts. There is another kind of

Peer which I am afraid to touch upon—that creature of—what shall I say?—of monstrous, nay, even of adulterous birth—the spiritual Peer. I assure you with the utmost frankness and sincerity that it is not in the nature of things that men in these positions should become willing fountains from which can flow great things for the freedom of any country. We are always told that the Peers are necessary as a check. If that is so, I must say they answer their purpose admirably.

But when we come to consider the question of a reform of the House of Commons, which the Constitution does not recognise as the House of Commons belonging to the Peers, but to the *nation*, we will allow the House of Peers to go for awhile into something like obscurity, and discuss it as if our sole object were to make it what the Constitution supposes it to be—a complete representation of the people in Parliament. With regard to the question of the Suffrage, which is one of the chief points on which I should insist, I have no doubt there are persons who, on reading my speech, will say, 'Subversive doctrine, violent language this. The change which you propose would endanger many things which we highly value.' Now, I beg to assure all those timid people that I do not wish to endanger or to move any of the ancient landmarks of our Constitution. I do not want to disturb this question of the franchise beyond what has been already sanctioned by Parliament and the country. I do not want to introduce any new principle or theoretical opinion which it may be found difficult to adopt. There are many men probably among those whom I see before me who are of opinion that every man should have a vote. They are for what is called 'universal suffrage,' or 'manhood suffrage'—something which means that every man of twenty-one years of age who has not forfeited his right by any misconduct, should have a vote. Let me say that, personally, I have not the smallest objection to the widest possible suffrage that the ingenuity of man can devise. At the same time, if I were now a member of a Government, and had to arrange a Reform Bill for next session, I should not act upon that principle. I will tell you upon what principle I would act. I find in the country great diversities of opinion. There are the Peers, of whom I have already spoken. They are citizens with ourselves, and have therefore a right to be considered. There are the rich and influential classes, who, as wealthy men are generally found to be, are a little timid of the great bulk of the people who have not many riches. There are thousands—scores of thousands—who imagine that they could not sleep safely in their beds if every man had a vote. We are surprised that children sometimes cannot sleep in the dark—that they fancy something dreadful will happen to them, and there are actually rich people in this country who believe that if every man had a vote it would give him a weapon wherewith to attack their property. There being all these diversities of opinion, it clearly is the duty of Government, and of Parliament too, to frame a measure which shall fairly represent what may be called the Reform opinion of the whole country. What have we at present in the way of franchises? We have the parish franchise. For generations, for ages past, there has been an extensive franchise in all our parishes. We have poor-law unions which have worked, on the whole, satisfactorily to the country. We have a franchise in our poor-law unions. We have a corporation franchise, and that franchise may be said to have worked to the satisfaction of the country. I will ask any man here whether he believes that in all the parishes, all the poor-law unions, and all the corporations, men have not conducted themselves with great propriety, and managed the affairs of their parishes, unions, and corporations satisfactorily? And I should like to ask him whether he would object to have the same franchise conferred upon them for the

election of Members to the House of Commons. There is one great point gained in such a franchise—your registration would be easy and inexpensive. There is another point—that whatever its omissions, whatever its exclusions, they would not be directed against any one particular class. It would admit the working people to electoral power just as fully as it would admit the middle, or what may be called the higher and richer classes. Therefore, as regards class and class, it would remove a great defect of the Reform Bill, and would give a suffrage so wide that I believe no one would suppose it did not afford a fair representation of all classes. I do not want anybody for a moment to suppose that this particular franchise is better than manhood suffrage. I am only speaking of what Government might do, of what it ought to do, and of what it might do, moreover, in accordance with the vast majority of opinion which exists in this country on this question.

With regard to the counties I shall say little. I know no good reason why the franchise should not be as extensive there as in the boroughs; but there appears to be a general understanding that the next step in counties shall be one short of that. But I think it is of great importance that the 40s. franchise should be extended to all parts of the United Kingdom as fully as it is to the people of England and Wales.

I now come to the question which I believe all persons who have studied the matter will readily agree is one of great importance to the country—how your Members shall be allotted to the various constituent bodies. I will ask you this simple question. What is the obvious rule which would recommend itself to every man when first about to arrange this allotment? Would he not argue in this way? The law has given certain persons the right of voting, and it presumes that every person who has that right is capable of deciding how he shall vote. Every elector, therefore, is of the same importance in the eye of the law, and why then should not every elector vote for the same portion of the whole Parliament? I shall be told that I am not to go to the United States for an illustration of this. I will not. I will go a little nearer home. Take the kingdom of Sardinia. I was in Turin last year, and I made inquiries as to the mode of election and the distribution of Members there; and I found that Genoa, with a population of 140,000, returned seven Members to the Sardinian Parliament. Sardinia is not a Republic, it is a limited Monarchy like our own. Let us go to the colonies of Australia. Take New South Wales. The capital—Sydney—returns eight Members to the New South Wales Parliament. In Victoria, the city of Melbourne returns thirteen Members to Parliament, and by the Bill now introduced by the Ministry of that colony, the number thirteen is about to be increased to eighteen. I believe that in Belgium and in Canada, both countries under a limited Monarchy, the same rule applies, and we know that throughout the whole of the United States, the number of Members is allotted according to the population, and that once in every ten years this scale is re-arranged; in fact, it works itself.

I do not for a moment argue that it is necessary that we should get an actuary to apportion the number of Members exactly according to his calculations of the number of the population, but we have a fair right to an honest approximation, and without it there can be no fair representation of the people. Look at London, putting aside the City. If you were to divide the six boroughs of which the metropolis is made up, you would still have 12 boroughs with 300,000 population each (larger than the population of Birmingham), and constituencies of 10,000. Divide them again, and you would have 24 boroughs, each of 150,000 population, with 5000 electors; and when the franchise is extended, the number will be still greater. I say

sians, who obtained possession of the town. At that time a nobleman of very high rank — no less a personage than Lord Stratford de Redcliffe — was Ambassador from the Queen of England at the city of the Sultan. He had been there for nearly twenty years. During the siege of Kars Colonel Williams wrote and forwarded to Lord Stratford at Constantinople more than sixty letters or despatches with reference to his position, stating how they were worn out with sorties and the attacks of the enemy; how long their provisions and ammunition might last, and urging him to take any steps which might be possible for the purpose of making a diversion in his favour, or of sending relief. All that was proper for Colonel Williams to write and communicate to the Ambassador of the Queen at Constantinople, he did write and communicate; but do you recollect the striking fact that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe did not reply to—did not acknowledge or take the smallest notice of—any one of these sixty or seventy despatches? He treated them as waste paper. He had been years at Constantinople, quarrelling with every European minister there, and bullying the ministers of the Sultan; but when his own countrymen and their allies were shut up in the fortified town of Kars, besieged by a powerful and overwhelming force, driven at length to starvation, and finally to capitulation, this great official treated the whole thing as utterly beneath his notice. Subsequently, Colonel Williams came to England and was made a baronet; Parliament passed an Act granting him a pension of 1000*l.* a-year, and the Marquis of Lansdowne, one of the Cabinet Ministers of the day, brought him into the House of Commons for his pocket borough of Calne, in Wiltshire. Colonel Williams has never opened his mouth in public in England on the subject of his treatment by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe; while that nobleman, who had been guilty of this great neglect—I say this enormous crime—has since taken his seat in the House of Lords, has become a great authority, and has now been sent by the Government on a special mission to Constantinople.

I need not tell you that I was not in favour of any of that Eastern policy, but I presume Lord Stratford was; he was one of the great authors of it, and I say that any man who takes office from his sovereign and his country as he took it, with a salary of 10,000*l.* a-year, and expenses of almost an equal amount, for the Embassy at Constantinople, is guilty of a scandalous abandonment of the duty he owes to the Queen and to the country if he pays no attention to such letters as those which Lord Stratford received from an officer of the Queen shut up with our allies in Kars. If Lord Stratford had been a Russian noble and had so behaved, before taking his seat in the House of Peers and going on a special mission to Constantinople, he would have had the advantage of being sent on a special mission to Siberia; while if he had been an Ambassador of the United States of America—but I cannot follow out the illustration, because in the United States there is no family influence, there is no power such as that wielded by our great territorial potentates: there is nothing in that country to shield an officer of the State from public reprobation, and therefore I am quite certain that no person deputed from the United States could by any possibility be guilty of the abandonment of duty which was manifested by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Whenever you get a House of Commons that fairly represents the nation, with a Cabinet that fairly represents the House of Commons—if there be any other Lord Stratford I would not like to predict precisely what will befall him; but I believe that such a man, with such a temper—for it was a question of temper —will not receive under such circumstances high and continuous employment from the Government of this country. I say we have a right, be it in peace, be it in war, when we employ

men in the service of the Crown and of the State, and pay them for their labour, to all their energies and to all their devotion.[1]

This question of Parliamentary Reform, then, is a great and serious question. I want to give a word of warning to those persons who are now engaged, if there be any engaged, in constructing a Reform Bill for the next session. Let them not bring in a delusive and sham measure. Universal suffrage, equal distribution, vote by ballot—any of these points may or may not be perilous; but if there be one thing more distinctly perilous than another to the ruling classes in this country, it is that now, when they are committed to at least a temporary (I wish it were a permanent) settlement of this great question, they should bring forward and pass a Bill which, while it pretends to offer you something great in the way of constitutional freedom, is found immediately after it has passed to be nothing but a delusion and a sham. It will disappoint everybody; it will exasperate all the Reformers; it will render a feeling, which is now not bitter, both bitter and malignant, and within twelve months after the Bill has passed, and the cheat is discovered, we shall be entered in all probability upon another agitation, but an agitation of a very different character from any we have yet seen. Let us have a real Bill, a good Bill, or no Bill at all.

The question at this moment is in the hands of the enemy. We stand the risk of having brought before us what I will describe as 'a country gentlemen's Reform Bill.' The country gentlemen have not been notorious for their sympathies in favour of Reform. We have always been carrying on, for the last thirty years and more, a steady and perpetual war against the predominance and the power of the country gentlemen in Parliament. If we look at their past policy we shall not have much confidence in their proposed measure. Their wars, their debts, their taxes, placed upon the bulk of the people, their stout opposition to the Reform Bill of 1832—all this leads us greatly to suspect them; and I confess for my own part I wish the question of Reform were in the hands of Reformers—in the hands of men of whose sympathies with respect to it we could not have, from their past lives, the shadow of a doubt. I have great fears that until you have a Ministry in which there are men who are really in favour of Reform, and of an honest Reform, you are not likely to get any such measure as the most moderate among us ought to be in the least satisfied with.

I must warn you against one phrase which I find our friends (we cannot now call any of them our opponents), the bewildered Reformers, are beginning to use. They say we must not on any account 'Americanize' our institutions. Now, I know only one institution in America of which the Americans need to be very greatly ashamed; and that institution was established under the monarchy, although unfortunately it has lived and flourished under the republic. They tell us in America numbers overwhelm property and education. Well, but numbers have not overwhelmed property and education in England, and yet look at legislation in England. Look at our wars, look at our debt, look at our taxes, look at this great fact—that every improvement of the last forty years has been an improvement which numbers, and numbers only, have wrested from the property, and what they call the education of the country. Our education is fairly represented by our Universities; but I say now, as I have said before, that if the Legislature

[1] Mr. Bright discovered that he was in error in describing Colonel Williams's letters as having been written *during* the siege of Kars. They were written before the siege began, and during Colonel Williams's preparations to resist the progress of the Russians in Asia. The facts are not literally exact, but the charge against Lord Stratford loses none of its gravity when the correction is made.

of England, if the Parliament of England, had been guided for thirty years past according to the counsels of the representatives from the Universities, England, instead of being a country of law and of order, would have been long before this a country of anarchy and of revolution. America is a strange bugbear. There are thirty-two at least, if not thirty-three, independent and sovereign States in the United States of America. Now, I am not one of those who believe that you cannot be free and happy under a monarchy such as ours. I am not proposing—I am the last person to propose—that the institutions of this country should be modelled upon the plan of some other country, because it is the plan of some other country; but I say, that if we are at liberty to draw science, products for our manufactures, and literature from every country in the world, why should we not, if we see anything good in the politics of another country, be equally at liberty to take a lesson in that respect also?

Speaking generally, in all the sovereign and independent States of America there is a franchise as wide as that which I have proposed to-night; there is an exact and equal allotment of members to the electors; and there is, throughout most of the States, the protection of the ballot. Yet in America we find law, order, property secure, and a population in the enjoyment of physical comforts and abundance, such as are not known to the great body of the people in this country, and which never have been known in any country in any age of the world before. Will any man dare to tell me, in the presence of this audience, that the English nation in England is a worse nation than the English nation in America? Are we less educated, are we less industrious, are we less moral, are we less subject to the law, are we less disposed to submit to all the just requirements of the Government? If we are so, and if the English nation in America excels us in all these particulars, does it not look very likely that the institutions in England are not as good in the training and rearing of a nation as the institutions in the United States? I do not say that; but those persons who say that the franchise, the distribution, and the ballot, which operate so well in America, would be perilous in England, do what I will not do—they libel the people of this country, and they libel our institutions.

Now, I have a suggestion to make, which I hope somebody will act upon. The Reformers now are more numerous than ever they were before. Why should they not, by some arrangement, have their own Reform Bill; have it introduced into Parliament, and supported with all the strength of this great national party; and if it be a Bill sensibly better than the Bill that is being prepared for us in Downing Street, why should we not, with all the unanimity of which we are capable, by public meetings, by petitions, and, when the proper time comes, by presenting ourselves at the polling-booths, do everything in our power to pass that measure into law? I say that we are great in numbers; that, united, we are great in strength; that we are invincible in the solidity of our arguments; that we are altogether unassailable in the justice of our cause. Shall we then, I ask you, even for a moment, be hopeless of our great cause? I feel almost ashamed even to argue it to such a meeting as this. I call to mind where I am, and who are those whom I see before me. Am I not in the town of Birmingham — England's central capital; and do not these eyes look upon the sons of those who, not thirty years ago, shook the fabric of privilege to its base? Not a few of the strong men of that time are now white with age. They approach the confines of their mortal day. Its evening is cheered with the remembrance of that great contest, and they rejoice in the freedom they have won. Shall their sons be less noble than they? Shall the fire which they kindled be extin-

guished with you? I see your answer in every face. You are resolved that the legacy which they bequeathed to you, you will hand down in an accumulated wealth of freedom to your children. As for me, my voice is feeble. I feel now sensibly and painfully that I am not what I was. I speak with diminished fire; I act with a lessened force; but as I am, my countrymen and my constituents, I will, if you will let me, be found in your ranks in the impending struggle.

REFORM.

II.

MANCHESTER, DECEMBER 10, 1858.

[At the general election in 1857, the Right Hon. T. Milner Gibson and Mr. Bright were defeated in the contest at Manchester. This speech was delivered at a great meeting in the Free-trade Hall, to which they were invited by their old friends and supporters in the Manchester constituency.]

I cannot tell you how much I rejoice in being permitted to meet so large a number of those whom I must describe as my old and dear friends in the Liberal cause. I fear, however, that the reception which you have granted to us to-night, and which you have but at this instant given to me, is calculated in some degree to disturb the balance of the mind, and to interfere with that calm judgment which is demanded by the circumstances under which we are met together, and by the gravity of that great question which is now being discussed in every part of the United Kingdom. I know not whether there be persons who will look upon this meeting in the light of the commemoration of a defeat which we have sustained. To me, it wears far more the aspect of the celebration of some great success. And may we not say that we are successful—that notwithstanding the vicissitudes which wait upon the career of public men, and upon the progress of public questions in a free country, we find as we look back over a term of years, that those beneficent principles which we have so often expounded and defended on this ground, are constantly making progress and obtaining more and more influence on the minds of all our countrymen?

Forty years ago, the spot where we are now assembled became famous. Thousands of the population of Manchester and its neighbourhood assembled here—not in this magnificent building, but under the wide canopy of heaven. They met only to plead with the Government and the Parliament of that day, that they might be permitted some share in the government of their country, and that they might be permitted further to possess that natural right which one would think no man would ever deny to another—the right of disposing of the produce of their labour in the open market of the world, in purchase for their daily bread. That meeting was dispersed by the rude arm of military power. The tragedy of that day proved at once the tyranny and brutality of the Government, and the helplessness and humiliation of the people. Now, you have seen a Ministry representing and supported by the political party that committed that iniquity—you have seen such a M[illegible] voting in th[illegible] [illegible]y kindled be extin-

favour of a resolution which declared that the repeal of the Corn-laws had been a great blessing to the country; and after having twenty-six years ago obtained one instalment of Reform, you have now the amazing spectacle of a Ministry representing and supported by that same political party, engaged at this very hour in the arrangement of the clauses of another Bill, which shall still further extend political rights to the great mass of the population of this country. Seeing this, then, who will despair? Since I have been able to think maturely upon public questions, since I have been able and have been permitted to open my mouth in these the open councils of my countrymen, I have never for one moment despaired; and when I look around me, and see this magnificent—I will say this all-powerful—assembly, my hopes, my faith, all are confirmed, and I gather fresh strength for whatever struggle is before us.

My right honourable Friend in his speech has almost entirely abstained from entering into details connected with the question of Parliamentary Reform. Now, I think that at this moment, wherever men assemble to discuss political questions, it would be a great misfortune if some one present did not go into some portion of the detail connected with that question. And perhaps in the peculiar position which I am now placed in with regard to it you will not expect that I should leave it altogether untouched. Let us recollect that whatever is said upon this question will meet with much hostile criticism from those who are not present with us. You know that I have recently, a few weeks ago, addressed large audiences of my constituents in Birmingham, upon this question; and you know to what kind of hostile criticism my speech or speeches on that occasion have been subjected. It is not in human wisdom to make speeches to please everybody; and it is not in human wisdom to attempt to do it. I addressing myself to that question, according to the light I have with regard to it from great study, from much consultation with others, and from an honest wish that I have, that the subject of Reform should be rightly viewed by every intelligent man amongst my countrymen.

Now we will mention two or three things that we do not want. We do not propose in the smallest degree to call in question or to limit the prerogatives of the Crown. I believe we are prepared to say that if the throne of England be filled with so much dignity and so much purity as we have known it in our time, and as we know it now to be, we hope that the venerable monarchy may be perpetual. We do not propose to discuss even, much less to limit the legal and constitutional privileges or prerogatives of the House of Peers. We know, everybody knows, nobody knows it better than the Peers, that a house of hereditary legislation cannot be a permanent institution in a free country. For we believe that such an institution must in the course of time require essential modification. Last year, or the year before, the Queen herself proposed to nominate persons to life peerages. That was deemed an essential change by the present members of the House of Peers, and in a manner that was not gracious to the Queen, that was not respectful to the nation, they almost insolently rejected the attempt of the Crown, and the Ministers of the Crown, to introduce into the House of Lords a member whose peerage should exist only so long as his life.

I do not want to discuss that question now. We want to discuss the question which is immediately before the country—which the Government has brought before the country—for we do not bring it before the country on this occasion—and a question in which we are deeply and closely interested. The House of Commons is so called, I presume, because it is understood and intended to represent all those portions of the people—the vast majority of the people—

who are not included in the privileged and titled classes. The constitution, if I know anything about it, intends that that House should fairly, openly, and widely represent all the vast interests of all the vast population who are called upon to obey the legislation which is mainly enacted by that House. Now, I wish to ask you this simple question. Do you believe, after examining the figures that have been placed before you for months and for years past, that the House of Commons does at present fulfil honestly its intended place in the Constitution, or is the organ of the expression of the opinions of all classes of the population of Great Britain and Ireland? You may have a shadow and form of representation, as of anything else. You know very well that you may have gorgeous temples—you may have in wonderful ostentation all the outward semblance of religion—yet there may be wholly wanting the life of Christianity itself. And you may have electors, a million or more, and you may have canvassing, and nominations, and polls, and returns, and houses of legislation, and speeches, and the contention of parties, and divisions, and laws enacted, and yet there may be only the form of representation, and its life and spirit and reality may be altogether absent. All this we had previous to 1832; yet nobody says now that we had representation before then. All this existed, or nearly all, in France, previous to the year 1848. A great deal of it exists there at this moment, and yet there is a general impression that representation is not free there. There is a general belief that it was not free here previous to the passing of the Reform Act.

I should like to put, in as few words as I can, exactly what we think the House of Commons should be. It should be a House composed of men sent by the free election of so many of the people, voting with such an equality of power as shall give a real expression to the opinions of the people. If anybody says that we are for levelling doctrines—that we intend to have a President instead of a Queen—which is a favourite theory with some few people, you at least will not believe them. I ask them again and again, if they choose to read once, to read again, that they may not misrepresent that which I am now proposing. Now, what is the British Constitution? I never saw it. I never heard of anybody who had handled it. It is not, in very few words, in any of the books. But there is, notwithstanding, something that we all understand by the British Constitution. It is not a thing meant entirely for the Crown. The Crown has its limits by Act of Parliament, and by custom. Nor is it intended entirely for the hereditary peerage. The House of Lords has its prerogatives and its privileges well defined. But the Constitution does not confine itself to care for the monarch on the throne, or for the peer in his gilded chamber. The Constitution regards the House of Commons as well. It regards you and me, and all the people of the United Kingdom. And it professes to take within its pale all these populations and these interests, and to give them as complete a shelter and as complete a voice as it gives to the Queen or to the peerage. But if you want the House of Commons elected by so many of the people as shall give a fair expression of the people's wishes, can any living man say that we possess it when five out of six of all the men he will find if he traverse every county from John O'Groat's to the Land's End, and from Cape Clear to the Giant's Causeway,—when five out of every six of these men have no more vote at the poll for a Member of Parliament than if they lived in some foreign land; when their utmost privilege at an election is to look on, to hold up their hands, and to shout for one candidate or the other?

But if you think it necessary that your Members should be elected by some fair number of votes, that votes should be given with something [illegible] equality of power, how far are y[illegible] extin-

this, when you hear that 330 Members of the House of Commons—more than one-half of the whole number—are returned by less than one-sixth even of that small number of persons to whom the franchise is entrusted? You give votes to a million out of six millions, and half the House of Commons is elected by less than 200,000 of those electors! And then, if bribery be somewhat common, and if intimidation, wherever it can be practised, is almost universal, how can you come to the conclusion that there is any real freedom of election whatsoever, when you survey the whole representation of the counties and boroughs of the kingdom?

I would ask your attention for a moment to those counties, to which your attention has been already turned by my right hon. Friend. The counties, as you know, return their Members by the votes, chiefly, of two classes—freeholders, and occupiers of lands or houses of the value of 50*l.* and upwards. Of these 50*l.* occupiers and upwards, there are about 200,000; but of occupiers between 10*l.* and 50*l.*, I see by a return recently made to the House of Commons, not less than 400,000. But the 400,000, by the present law, are entirely ignored and excluded; and the 200,000, being to a very large extent occupiers of land, and occupiers for the most part without leases, are to a large extent dependent upon the good-will of their landlords, and their votes, speaking generally, are employed to swell the power of the great landed proprietors in all the county elections of the kingdom. Now, Lord Derby, the present Prime Minister, is a man who has the power of expressing very accurately what he means; he is a great master of the English language; and he once gave us an illustration of what is understood in England by county representation. He said that, if anybody would tell him what were the politics of three or four of the great landed proprietors of any county, he could tell at once what were the politics of the Members for that [illegible]. We might fancy, if we did not know something about it ourselves, that this was some conjuring trick, but it is in point of fact nothing but that which we all know. The 'three or four great proprietors' are the constituents of the county, and the Members are the representatives of those great proprietors. They have, as you know, unfortunately for us, small sympathy with commerce, and they have never manifested, at least for the last sixty years, any sympathy whatever with Reform of any kind. How should they? They are connected with the peerage, and with the great territorial power. The members of their families, generally speaking, do not come into the operations of trade. They find employment—at least they find salaries—in the military or naval service, or some other service of the country; or they take shelter from the storms of life in some snug family living in the Church.

I venture to say that, if it were possible to have an accurate account of the receipts and payments of those families, there are many hundreds of them—I believe there are some thousands—who receive more in the way of emolument, and salaries of one kind or other, from the public revenues, from the sixty or seventy millions of taxes which you annually raise, or from that portion of the public estate which for the time is entrusted to the Established Church—I believe they receive far more than the whole of the taxes which they annually pay to the expenditure of the State.

But we do not find fault only with the counties; the boroughs are not at all in a satisfactory state. I was looking down a list, the other night, beginning with the Tower Hamlets, the largest population, and coming down to some one which is the smallest, I forget its name; but I found that there were 71 boroughs, not one of which had a population of 10,000 persons. I think 10,000 is about one-third the average size of the several wards in Manchester. The whole population of the 71 boroughs is only 467,000, which is not very much more than the present population of Man-

chester and Salford; and yet these 71 boroughs return 117 Members to the House of Commons, while Manchester and Salford return only three Members. But if you go a little lower, to 8,000 as a standard, you will find not less than 54 boroughs, and their whole population is exactly 316,000, which is also exactly the population of the city of Manchester at the census of 1851; but these 54 boroughs return 89 Members, while Manchester returns only two. If Manchester and Salford, by some tradition of the past, or by some accident or other, returned 117 Members, or if Manchester returned 89 Members—if the conditions which I have stated were just reversed—do you not think that we should have from other parts of the country—probably from the landed gentry—a very violent assertion that we were favoured in the representation, and that the condition of things was monstrous and intolerable, and must be put an end to?

But there is another point which you do not find out from the population tables. That is this—that whereas the boroughs of Manchester and Salford can do as they like, acting wisely at one time and foolishly at another—at least they are free to follow their own information, their own light, their own convictions; these little boroughs are not so free, being, I dare to say, very little better than what we used to describe by the unpleasant term of 'rotten.' They are under influence of some kind or other. A very little clique, indeed, two or three persons, in a very small borough, can have a great influence. A neighbouring landowner—some subtle and not very scrupulous lawyer—by turning the 'screw,' can, if he likes, turn the scale. But these boroughs are not only so small in population, but for the most part they cannot pretend to the power of free election in any way whatsoever.

I come now to the result of all this—that a House of Commons so formed, becomes for the most part, as we know it is, a sort of deputy to the House of Lords, and an organ of the great territorial interest of the country. It hates changes, with an animosity that nothing can assuage. It hates economy. Let any man propose in the House of Commons that there shall be a fair committee appointed, to which shall be submitted those enormous estimates of which we have so much reason to complain, and you will find that very few persons in the House will vote for such a committee, and it will be stoutly resisted by the Government, whether formed from the Conservative or the Whig section of the House. The House hates equality of taxation. The succession-duty is a glaring instance of it. The income-tax is another instance scarcely less glaring. It gives to property vast influence in the government of the country, and it perpetually shields property from its fair burden of taxation. It was the same before the Reform Bill as it is now.

Some people are of opinion that we have had much better legislation since the Reform Bill than we had before. I do not deny it; but I believe it is owing much more to the general intelligence of the people, an intelligence which has penetrated even into the House of Commons and into the House of Lords, than to any more exact representation of the influence of the constituencies, or to any change that took place by the Reform Act. You know that before the Reform Bill, Catholic Emancipation was granted, when a civil war was about to break out in Ireland. You know that the Reform Bill itself was granted when an insurrection, perhaps a revolution, was at the door. And you know that in 1846 the repeal of the Corn-laws was granted, not because the House of Commons or the House of Lords wished to grant it. By no means. For I believe that not more than one hundred Members had ever voted for Mr. Villiers' motion for the repeal, until it was granted in 1846, because a portion of the kingdom was visited with a famine so intense, that Lord John Russell, in order to describe

its magnitude and its severity, compared it to the famines which are recorded to have desolated parts of Europe during the thirteenth century. It required a famine, not a scarcity. There had been many scarcities, as you know. There had been a scarcity for years. On more than one occasion thousands and hundreds of thousands of families had been pressed into penury, and not a few into premature graves. And yet the Corn-law was not repealed. To quote two lines of the unhappy Chatterton—

> 'The civil power then snored at ease,
> While soldiers fired to keep the peace.'

And it was not till the famine became so sore in the land that all Europe and the civilized world were startled with the horrors that floated across every ocean and in every gale, that the Parliament of England at last consented to take their hand from the food of the people. And you know that a large party—a party who are now in possession of the Government—assailed and denounced Sir Robert Peel as a traitor and a coward, because he did not make a still greater fight on behalf of the most odious monopoly that ever existed in any country.

And now they do not give you the Ballot; not because they do not understand it as well as you do, but precisely because they do understand it. Do you suppose there would be such a whip in the House, such a steady and powerful phalanx of Members brought up, county Members especially, to vote against the Ballot, if they did not believe all we say in favour of the Ballot? You have had it discussed since the Reform Bill. The argument has been already exhausted for twenty years, yet for all that they do not give you the Ballot.

Take the question of Church Rates. A Bill to repeal the Church Rates has just passed the House of Commons. But how many years has it been discussed? The arguments were the same before I went into the House of Commons that they were last session. Take the question of the Game Laws. Would it be tolerated—would it be tolerated by the people of this country, if they were fairly polled, that there should exist laws whose object is to promote, to the greatest possible extent, the preservation of wild animals for the sport of the territorial and wealthy classes? The law has never yet said that game was property. It treats it as something else. It dare not say that game is property, and it cannot say so. But we have several Acts of Parliament—clauses of the utmost complication—traps of every kind, as many to catch the poacher as the poacher has to catch the game. And you have in this civilized and Christian country—we are not at all discussing the United States—in this civilized and Christian country, with an ancient monarchy, an hereditary peerage, an Established Church, and all that can be necessary to preserve law and order, according to the opinion of some of those who criticise what I say; yet you have, in the months of November and December particularly, in every year, men going out armed, not to protect cows, and sheep, and poultry, which are recognised and understood as property—for nobody attempts to meddle with them—but to preserve that which the law dare not designate as property, and the preservation of which it dare not commit to the ordinary guardians of the public peace. And you have further from your towns and from your villages, and from your country parishes, bands of men armed to the teeth, instigated it may be occasionally by want, more often probably by the love of adventure—you have bands of men of this kind prowling about in almost every county endeavouring to destroy this game; and you have outrages such as we have had described to us within the last month, in which several of our fellow-creatures have fallen victims, and have been murdered. No; the dukes, and lords, and county Members, and great men of any name, must not tell me that a Parliament and a House of Commons

that perpetuates this enormity represents the intelligence and the morality of the Christian population of this country. And to show you how little a Prime Minister even is master of his own actions in the face of that great territorial interest, let me tell you that when I, some years ago, and before I had any political connection even with Manchester, when I gave notice of a motion in the House of Commons for a Select Committee to inquire into the operation of the Game Law—to inquire merely—such was the anxiety, such was the trembling terror of these gentlemen, that Sir Robert Peel was obliged to call his followers together in Downing-street, and there to reason with them, and to obtain their co-operation in the course which he felt himself bound to pursue, which was to consent to the Committee for which I was about to move. I need not tell you that the Committee produced very little result. Committees of the House of Commons very seldom do yield much result. For what the House is, Committees generally are; and if a Committee does happen to stumble upon something valuable, it is generally distasteful to the House, and is immediately rejected by it. I believe that no great measure passes the House of Commons merely because it is just. It passes sometimes because the people are restive; sometimes because the exigencies of party require that something should be done. But it does not pass—I state it fearlessly after fifteen years' sitting in that House—a great measure of justice does not pass because it is just.

Then I come to the conclusion that Reform is necessary. But I can show you further that it is inevitable. The Government is at a dead lock without Parliamentary Reform. The only great result of the Reform Bill, in the House, has been this, that it has introduced about one hundred men who do at times show some amount of independence, and they act free from the shackles of the Tory or Whig sections of the aristocracy. And it is we—it is by our work, it is by our speeches, by our votes, that we transfer the Government from one party to the other. But we make it impossible for either of them to conduct the Government upon those antiquated principles which we and the people of England are ready to abolish. Now I will ask you another question. What is the obvious, the simple, in fact the only mode by which you can reform the House of Commons? If a man is hungry, he eats; if he is thirsty, he drinks; and if he is cold, he puts on an extra coat, or goes nearer to the fire. If the number of electors is too small, extend the suffrage. If it be intolerable that more than half the House of Commons shall be returned by one-sixth of the electors, or that a population equal to that of Manchester should return 89 Members in other parts of the country, while here it only returns two, the obvious remedy is to take from one scale and put into the other. And if there be this bribery and this intimidation, the remedy which every man who has considered the question, and who wishes for freedom of election, the remedy which he points to, is the remedy of the Ballot.

You have read, I have no doubt, some, I hope not all, of those interminable leading articles which have been written since I was at Birmingham. You have read some speeches, probably, which have commented on what I said. I was charged with wishing to adopt republican institutions, levelling principles, introducing something or other wholly destructive of everything good, and noble, and admirable in this country. Well, I find the suffrage in the boroughs is 10*l.* What did I propose? I did not propose to put it to 9*l.* That would have been to be laughed at. These very writers and speakers would have said, 'What a lame thing this is—dissatisfied with 10*l.*, happy with 9*l.*!' I did not ask for 8*l.*, nor for 7*l.*, nor for 6*l.* The Reform Bill, stopping at 10*l.*, drew a line, on one side of which were the constituencies as we now have them,

and on the other side the great body of the working classes. The working classes were purposely excluded by the adoption of the 10*l.* franchise. But the 9*l.* would not have admitted them, nor the 8*l.*, nor the 7*l.* The 6*l.* would have admitted a considerable number, and the 5*l.* probably would admit nearly all of them that can be admitted. I felt that it was not worth while making, as the saying is, 'two bites at a cherry.' If you wish to admit the working classes —for that is the question—if you wish to admit them, you must bring your suffrage down to the point that will admit them, or else you are only practising upon them precisely the same sort of legislation that they complain of with regard to the Bill of 1832.

But then I find a most admirable thing all ready at my hands. I find in all our parishes from the time of Queen Elizabeth, and for anything I know from the time of Alfred—I do not know how many hundred years it has lasted —a franchise which everybody has been contented with, and nobody has condemned, and which has done no harm to law, or order, or security of property. I find that when Parliament came to legislate for Poor-law unions, it adopted this same franchise as the basis of the union franchise. When it came to legislate for corporations, it adopted, with some restrictions, the same franchise as the basis. Why tell me that this franchise does not act properly in the United States? For my argument, I do not care a farthing whether it does or not. We have tried it here, in our parishes, our unions, our corporations; and I say, if it acts on the whole justly, in those three departments of representation, it may be trusted, without danger, in that more important representation which concerns our Imperial Legislature. I am in favour of authority, particularly when it agrees with my own opinion. I will read from an authority which is not one that the Whig party ought to think lightly of. In the year 1797—sixty-one years ago—Mr. Grey (afterwards Lord Grey of the Reform Bill) brought forward a motion in the House of Commons for a Bill to establish household suffrage in all the boroughs of the kingdom. I will not give you what Mr. Grey said about it, for I do not happen to have any portion of his speech with me; but I will give you the words of Mr. Fox—Charles James Fox—the greatest light, I presume, which the Whig party has ever offered to the country. Charles James Fox said this:—

'I think that to extend the representation to housekeepers is the best and most justifiable plan of Reform. I think also that it is a most perfect recurrence to first principles—I do not mean to the first principles of society, nor to the abstract principles of representation, but to the first known and recorded principles of our constitution. According to the early history of England, and the highest authorities in our parliamentary constitution, I find this to be the case. It is the opinion of the celebrated Glanville, that in all cases where no particular right intervenes, the common law right of paying scot and lot was the right of election in the land. This was the opinion of Serjeant Glanville, and of one of the most celebrated committees of which our parliamentary history has to boast; and this, in my opinion, is the safest line of conduct that you can adopt.'

Now, what is it that I propose? That every householder, of course, because every householder is rated to the poor, shall have a vote; and if a man be not a householder strictly, but if he have an office, or a warehouse, or a stable, or land—if he shall have any property in his occupation which the Poor-law taxes, out of which he must contribute to the support of the poor, then I say I would give that man a vote. Now, sixty years is a long time. We have members of the aristocracy of this country exhibiting themselves frequently upon platforms on various occasions. They tell the people how wonderfully education has advanced; how much Parliament grants every year, and how much voluntary effort does; what a

great step the people have taken forward. I wish they would come to the legitimate conclusion after all this praise of the people. Your statisticians tell you that two millions of the people are subscribers to benefit societies, and that their funds amount to more than nine millions sterling. Is that no proof of providence? Is that no proof of improvement and advancement? Who is the man that dare stand before any considerable number of his countrymen, and libel them by saying that the right which Mr. Grey, and which Charles James Fox, advocated for you in 1797, you are still so degraded that you are not fit to be trusted with in the year 1858? And of course with regard to your small boroughs, you must take some point of population, and you must cut off all those below it. You must allow their present electors to merge, as they would necessarily merge, in the 10*l.* franchise, which in all probability you will establish for your counties.

But still I know exactly how we shall be met—'You are going to Americanise us.' Nothing is so dreadful to an Englishman who is thinking of emigrating across the Atlantic, as that we should be Americanised in England. That is a phrase invented by some cunning knave, intended to catch a good many very simple dupes, and no doubt it will catch some of them. But I should like to ask these gentlemen, whether representation is not an English custom and an English principle? They were Englishmen who first took it to the United States. It is said that wherever an Englishman goes, just as he takes with him his white skin, he takes with him the foundation of representative institutions. He has taken them already to the Cape; he is already as busy as possible in building up four or five monarchical republics in Australia; he has carried the representative system to Canada; he carries it wherever he goes. The Bill of 1832 was a desperate measure in the direction of Americanising us. It took some boroughs, where twelve members of a corporation returned the Members to Parliament, and it gave the suffrage to 5,000 of the people. That was Americanising such boroughs with a vengeance. The more you extend your representation, the more, of course, you become like that systematic and theoretically perfect representation which exists in the United States of America.

It is curious how free countries, and countries that we deem not free, often exhibit the same kind of thing at the same time. You know that lately a most distinguished Frenchman wrote a pamphlet about England—about a debate in the English Parliament. He was charmed with the freedom of debate; he was charmed with the absence of all kind of difficulty in expressing our opinions, and he went away full of this impression; and he wrote a pamphlet in burning words, describing what he had seen in England, and by inference, of course, saying something that was not palatable to those who are the present directors of the Government in France. Well, what was done? It was found out that it was an indictable offence, and the advocate for the prosecution said in so many words, 'You praised England, and in doing so you humiliated France.' An humble individual like myself comes before his constituents, and he finds a nation of twenty or thirty millions, chiefly of Englishmen, on the other side of the Atlantic. He finds that with some small exceptions, in two or three of the transatlantic cities, which are more German and Irish than American, he finds there in all the Free States law and order and security of property, equal to that which is found in the course of years in any other country in the world. And he says that to his constituents. He is not indicted for it; they do not give him so many pounds' fine, and so many months' imprisonment; but some scores of writers for the press, men who, or some of them, pretend to be in favour of liberty in England, but men who, if they were dressed in the garb that most becomes them, would be dressed in

plush—these men assail me; and, probably, if I were in France, and they were in France, they would do their best to indict and prosecute me.

One word more upon this. I have said over and over again, that, perhaps, I am the very last man in England who would propose any institution here because I found it elsewhere. I am not insensible to some things that appear to me to be errors in principle, some that are errors in practice, in the constitution and the customs of the United States. But I protest against our being shut up to take nothing from America but cotton, and rice, and tobacco. And, in fact, we do take a good many other things. I am told that my friend Mr. Platt, a member of a very eminent firm, has a wonderful machine from America with which to make bricks. We know that the agriculture of this country has been greatly advantaged by the importation of reaping machines from America. We know that those persons who are going about so apprehensive of an invasion, have particular reason to be delighted with America, because they have received from that country the invention of the revolver. At this moment, in the Government small-arms establishment at Enfield, they have patent machinery from America for making gun-stocks. They can turn out a gun-stock, I am told, in twenty-two minutes, fit for the barrel. What a dreadful thing to think of! And I am sure that Mr. Miles, if his Protectionist principles have not long ago deserted him, will be horrified to hear that they have actually brought Americans over to show the English how to work them. But there is much more behind. The *Times*, the *Morning Star*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the leading newspaper in this district, the *Manchester Daily Examiner*, with, I believe, two or three of the widely-circulated London weekly papers, are all printed on machines which were either made in America, or, being made in this country, were made on the American patent. And further than this, do you not remember that the West Enders, including even ladies, have been subscribing ten guineas apiece to invite a clever farmer from Ohio to show them how to tame a horse? Anything but politics. You may delight yourself with their charming poets—with Bryant, and Whittier, and Longfellow; you may interest and instruct yourself by their great historians—Bancroft, and Prescott, and Motley; but if you ask how free popular institutions are working among your own countrymen on the American continent, you are denounced as unpatriotic, and charged with treason to the House of Lords.

I will read a passage that was particularly galling to those gentlemen, from the report of my speech at Birmingham. It is very short. I said:—'Generally, in all the sovereign and independent States of America, there is a franchise as wide as that which I have proposed to-night. There is an exact and equal limit of Members to the electors; and there is, throughout many of the States, the protection of the ballot; yet in America we find law, order, and property secure, and a population in the enjoyment of physical comforts and abundance such as are not known to the great body of the people of this country, and which have never been known in any country in any age of the world before.' Now, Lord John Russell a short time ago was at Liverpool, at a meeting of the Social Science Association, and he made a speech, many parts of which, I think, were admirable and instructive. He referred to America in two particulars, and showed how, in the States of New York and Louisiana, the laws had been codified and simplified. He said that with a few days' study a man might make himself perfectly acquainted with the laws with regard to land and landed property. He did not see (and Lord John Russell is not afraid to look abroad on a matter of this kind) why an old country—I do not quote his exact words—should be compelled to continue a system which was not necessary,

and which it was found so advantageous to dispense with in a new country. But he said this:—

'It is education which enables the United States of America to proceed in their wonderful career, upheld by the most popular institutions, without serious disturbance of law and order.'

I quote another nobleman—a most estimable man too—a man who has done in his time great justice to the people and the institutions of the United States—the Earl of Carlisle. Eight years ago, when the state of America was fresh in his mind, he delivered a lecture, from which I have taken two extracts. Speaking of their elections, he says:—

'Elections may seem the universal business, the topic and passion of life; but these are, at least with but few exceptions, carried on without any approach to tumult, rudeness, or disorder; those which I happened to see were the most sedate, unimpassioned processes I can imagine. In the Free States, at least, the people at large bear an active, and I believe, on the whole, a useful part in all the concerns of internal government and practical daily life.'

And then speaking of the condition of the people he said—and you will know how far it corroborates, how far it exceeds even, what I said:—

'The feature which is the most obvious and, probably, the most inevitable, is the nearly entire absence, certainly of the appearance, in a great degree of the reality, of poverty. In no part of the world, I imagine, is there so much general comfort amongst the great bulk of the people; and a gushing abundance struck me as the permanent character of the land.'

And then with his own generous sympathy, he went on to say:—

'It is not easy to describe how far this consideration goes to brighten the face of nature, and give room for its undisturbed enjoyment.'

I cannot, of course, help the fact that Lord Carlisle for a moment has fallen into rather a foolish panic since I undertook to address my constituents at Birmingham. I can assure him I do not wish to introduce American institutions here. But I want to argue this point—that the people of England are now in a condition wherein it would be just to them, and safe for all classes in the country, that they should be widely entrusted with the possession of the elective franchise.

Now I want to ask you, before I sit down, whether we can realise, or whether we can do anything towards realising, such a project of reform as that of which I have given you the very faintest sketch to-night? There is a danger awaiting us. It is quite possible, I think it is not wholly improbable, if the present Government should introduce a Bill very ineffectual, wholly falling short of what we have a right to expect, that there should be some combination of the most unworthy portion of the Whig party with the present Government, for the sake of carrying that Bill. It would be a great misfortune to us if any such thing should happen. But that misfortune would be but temporary. It would be a fatal act on the part of the Whig party to take any such course as that. They would bring about this great result,—that the aristocracy who were wholly opposed to free Parliaments in this country, would sit on one side of the House, and that we, who may be considered of the more Democratic party, would take our seats on the other side of the House. But I will undertake to say that if that division should once take place in Parliament, every election would increase the power of the Democratic section; and that the remembrance of the treason to the people which would be effected by conduct such as this would create an animosity towards the ruling class, against which I believe they would be wholly unable to contend.

I have come to the conclusion of the observations I intended to offer you

upon these questions. Of myself I must add one or two words. My position in reference to this question is just now, as you know, one of heavy responsibility. I feel it to be so. I know it to be so. I have been requested by those who believed they represented a large amount of public opinion, to undertake the preparation of a Bill to be submitted to the House of Commons during the coming session. I have not sought the office. I did everything I could to decline it, without being guilty of an absolute desertion of what appeared to be my duty. I am told—some that are not friends of mine and some that are my friends tell me—that I hazard whatever little reputation I have with the public in taking this course. If it be so, I can only say that the creation or the sustaining of a reputation has never been the great motive in my political life. I have said before, and every day I am more sensible of it, how ill qualified I am, in many respects, for the work which I have undertaken, and I am more and more sensible of the almost insurmountable obstacles which lie in the path before me. But I know that the cause is a just cause. I know that its success is necessary to the great future of this country; and I am perfectly certain that, sooner or later, it must prevail. From this platform I do not speak to you only—I speak to all my countrymen. If they wish for Reform, —if they think me honest, informed, capable on this question—if they have any confidence in those with whom I am associated,—then let them meet in their cities, their towns, their villages,—in country parishes even, where free speech is not forbidden,—let them meet and speak; let them resolve, and let them petition. If they do this, I think I can promise them that before long they will be in full possession and in free exercise of those political rights, which are not more necessary to their national interests than they are consistent with the principles of their boasted Constitution.

REFORM.

III.

GLASGOW, DECEMBER 21, 1858.

[Mr. Bright visited Scotland, and spoke at Edinburgh and Glasgow in the winter of 1858, on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. At the same time he drew up a Bill, *for the amendment of the representation, the main features of which were*—the borough franchise was conferred on all who were rated to the relief of the poor, and on all lodgers who paid a rent of ten pounds; no more freemen were to be created; and the county franchise was reduced to 10*l.* rental. The Bill put the returning officer's expenses on the county or borough rate; prescribed that votes should be taken by ballot; disfranchised fifty-six English, twenty-one Scotch, and nine Irish boroughs; and took away one Member from thirty-four other boroughs. The seats obtained by these disfranchisements were to be distributed according to population among the larger towns, counties, and divisions of counties in the United Kingdom. The Bill was not brought into Parliament, but the provisions of it were well known, and discussed at the time.]

When I look upon these great meetings, at several of which I have been permitted recently to be present, I cannot help asking myself, What is the question—what is the matter—which appears to be stirring to their very innermost depths the hearts of my countrymen? Is it some sudden frenzy, some fanaticism which wise men must rather be sorry for than rejoice over? Is it some phantom which you pursue and never overtake? Judging by the looks of expectation and hope—even of assurance of success—which light up the countenances of so many before me, I must believe you have at least some great and worthy object which has brought us together. I believe no more worthy object can assemble the citizens of any free nation; for here we are met to discuss the great question of Constitutional Reform, and to consider how far it may be possible to confirm and give greater permanence and security to whatsoever portion of liberty we have derived from our forefathers. Let me remind you that when you discuss questions connected with the House of Commons, you are discussing that branch of the Legislature which is far the most important to liberty—without which, in fact, liberty cannot exist. You may have liberty with a monarchy, as you have in this country, but you may have a monarchy without liberty, as you see in many other countries of Europe. You may have liberty, as we have here, even with a portion of the legislative power in the hand of hereditary legislators; but you might have hereditary legislators and no liberty whatever. On [illegible] that branch [illegible]ons I intended to offer you

we are about to discuss is not only consistent with the existence of liberty, but it is inseparable in this country from the existence of liberty.

One of the greatest men, one of the brightest names in the muster-roll of English worthies—the illustrious founder of the colony and province of Pennsylvania—gives this definition of freedom. He says, 'That is a free country where the laws rule, and where the people are parties to the making of the laws.' And we are assembled to-night, I hope, in the full understanding of the magnitude of the question before us, and with the resolve in our hearts that we will, if we can, by the extension and improvement of our representative system, confirm and secure permanently, as far as lies in our power, that which is the greatest guarantee of freedom which we in this country possess. Now, in the discussion of this question, we are in a very different position from that in which we found ourselves when I was here before. It is generally conceded that the figures are all on our side. You recollect that, twelve or fourteen years ago, there were orators almost innumerable going about the country—there were some scores of them—who attacked us with figures without end on the policy of Protection. I do not intend to dig up these from the oblivion which the orators themselves now wish they should be buried in, but I turn to them for the purpose of pointing out that nobody gets up to tell us, and to prove from the multiplication table, that the people are fairly represented in the House of Commons.

But there is one charge brought against us that it is difficult to escape from. I am told that I use the same figures and facts in my various speeches. What should I be told if I used different figures and facts each time I spoke? It is the same case and the same grievance, and I speak to men of the same order on each occasion, and who are to be appealed to and roused by the same facts and statements, and therefore I ... be expected to say something ...ch I have said on other occasions. For instance, if I tell you that the whole body of electors of the United Kingdom amounts only to one-sixth portion of the whole adult men of the United Kingdom, and if I tell you that one-sixth of these electors—that is, one thirty-sixth of the adult men of the United Kingdom—return more than one-half of the Members of the House of Commons, I shall find it difficult to convey a clear idea of that fact, unless I make that statement; and although I may grieve our terrible critics, who watch over everything which I say, yet I am bound to explain this matter to my countrymen, wherever I meet them, and whenever they are willing to hear. Putting that statement into another form, we have at least six millions of grown men in the United Kingdom, yet we have not more than one million who have votes, and I find by the Parliamentary returns that 200,000 electors of that million return more than half of the Members who sit in the House of Commons. The fact is, that it is easy to show that the electoral body is so grouped and managed, and the whole machine is so ingeniously contrived, that almost the whole objects for which such an assembly should exist are frustrated under the system which prevails among us.

There is another illustration which has occurred to me. I have imagined that all the men over twenty-one years of age of the United Kingdom were assembled on Salisbury Plain, or, not to go so far, in some wild and desolate part of your own country, although I should hesitate to take you there even in imagination, for fear we should be charged with disturbing those sacred animals, the grouse and the deer. But for the sake of this illustration, we will imagine ourselves so assembled, and that the framers of our Parliamentary arrangements address these six millions of men, and say to five millions of them —comprising almost the whole body of the working classes, and a large portion of the middle classes—they say to them, 'We don't want you, you may return to

your homes, and then we who are left will do your business for you.' Well, there would remain a million who would compose the electoral body. Let us make another separation. Take all the boroughs which compose the metropolis of the kingdom, seven great boroughs, *and their seven great constituencies*; then add to them the constituencies of the seven next largest boroughs — Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Dublin, and Edinburgh. It would require you to take 200,000 from this million to form the constituencies of London and the other great constituencies. And when you have formed them, you would find they were permitted to return thirty Members to the English Parliament. But in another part of the plain you find 200,000 men taken out of the group, and they are permitted to return one hundred and twenty-six Members to the House of Commons.

We see at a glance that although Parliament must do something when it is sitting, and must pass, sometimes bad and sometimes good measures, and the good ones with difficulty, we cannot but be sensible that, not as a machine for carrying out views on particular questions, but for sustaining the character of the country in the Legislature, it would be impossible to devise any plan more clumsy and more untrustworthy with reference to the purpose for which it exists. Those boroughs which I have mentioned, namely, Manchester and the other seven great cities, have a population of nearly 3,000,000, and yet they only return thirty Members to the House of Commons. Of these 200,000 electors you have not heard the last. You do not know so much of it in Scotland as we do in England. Those 200,000 we left together are in groups, and are scattered up and down the country—many in Ireland—very many in England—with constituencies as low as eighty-six in number, and others, a considerable number, with two hundred and three hundred electors. The bulk of these have only a small body of electors compared with the large towns and constituencies. Now, when you have a small number of men together they can hardly keep themselves warm, and they cannot preserve their independence; and the nobles or landholders, *and two or three lawyers, or two or three anybodies*, who choose to combine and act with a fair amount of unity and subtlety, will control the representation of these small boroughs—and the Members who go up to the House of Commons from them are often, and generally, not earnest men, not anxious to carry out any great public principle, or any principle at all; for the House of Commons is a convenient club, and a nice lounge, and affords a pleasant means of filling up their time; and the most of them being men of no business, they still want something respectable to be engaged in, that they may pretend not to be absolutely idle.

Well, it follows from all this that the general result of what we call our Parliamentary representation is not found efficient as the guard of our national interests. It does not respond with any heartiness or any willingness to the aspirations of the people for better government, but it is found to be in sympathy—not with you, but—with the ruling class, and is infinitely more careful to preserve monopolies and privileges than the general rights of the great body of the nation.

But to-morrow morning, somebody who is probably now, or will soon be sitting pen in hand, will say, with a show of reason, that I am arguing entirely upon the question of the magnitude of populations. That is not true; but still he may assert, that, in a country like this, numbers simply should not decide this great question, and he will say that property ought to be taken into consideration as well as population. Well, let us test the worth of that appeal. Take your two foremost cities, and compare them with other cities which enjoy an unfair share of the representation. Let us take our

two cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. I have the taxable property of these two cities. Take Schedule A of the income and property tax, which means lands and buildings, things which you can see, and take Schedule D, which means profits on trades and the income of professions—then the taxable property of these two cities is 7,800,000*l.*, leaving out odd sums. There are one hundred and one boroughs in Great Britain and Ireland, whose taxable property is 7,434,000*l.*, some 350,000*l.* less than the taxable property of Edinburgh and Glasgow. But, then, which has most of the representation? The larger amount of that taxable property returns altogether only four Members to the House of Commons, and those other boroughs, with the smaller amount of taxable property, no less than one hundred and twenty-six Members to that House. Let me make this explanation on the Bill which Lord John Russell, acting in Lord Aberdeen's Government, brought before Parliament in 1854, and which did not become law. He proposed to disfranchise all boroughs with populations less than 5000, and where the number of electors was less than three hundred. Now, I believe if the line is drawn at 7000, it will leave this amazing disparity, that 7,800,000*l.* of taxable property will be represented by four Members, and that a smaller amount of taxable property will be still represented by one hundred and twenty-six Members in the present House of Commons. Take another illustration on that point, namely, the annual sums paid by the people of Edinburgh and Glasgow in taxes, including income-tax and property-tax in the two Schedules referred to; including also house-duty, assessed taxes, land-tax, and the whole of those direct taxes paid by the population of Edinburgh and Glasgow,—the amount is 556,000*l.*, represented by four Members; while the sum which the one hundred and twenty-six Members represent in the annual direct taxes paid by their constituents is 568,000*l.*, being 11,000*l.* more than is paid by the populations of Edinburgh and Glasgow. In short, my investigations lead me to this conclusion, that whether we take numbers, or industry and wealth, or what we comprehend as political independence—I do not care by what test you try it—you come to the same startling, the same impressive result, that these great populations and great interests are most inadequately represented in the House of Commons under our present system of representation.

Well, having got thus far, we must have a change; and the question is, what change? I have a great suspicion of those men who profess great anxiety for something to be done, but who constantly assail those who are attempting to do something. You are aware that less than two months ago I had the privilege of addressing on two occasions very large meetings of the constituency of Birmingham. You remember the howl of astonishment which arose. I do not complain of the Tory papers, because they are labouring in their always unsuccessful vocation; but of that which was set up by papers calling themselves Liberal, but which are written by men who seem to be manacled by the triumph of 1832, but who are not so far advanced now as at the time of the Reform Bill. I say to any of you who read leading articles, and who invariably believe them—and I have not the slightest doubt that this kind of faith may be prevalent among some here—it is impossible, I believe, for anybody to compare the speech at Birmingham with that at Manchester, or the two speeches with the speech in Edinburgh, and to discover the slightest possible abandonment of any one single sentiment that I uttered on the first occasion. Do these men suppose that I have the effrontery to stand before many thousands of my countrymen, after days and weeks of notice that I am to appear before them, and that I come, then, to speak merely the temper, the passion, and the sentiments of the hour? They little know, if they dream of this, the sense of responsibility under which, I

think, every man should speak who offers himself on any occasion as the expounder of the opinions, or to be the guide of the deliberations, of his countrymen.

Nearly thirty years ago the sentiments that I have uttered upon this great question of Parliamentary Reform were proclaimed to thousands of our countrymen by Lord Durham. My opinions with regard to the franchise are not novel. I stated in Manchester that they were but the opinions which Mr. Fox and Lord Grey proposed to the House of Commons in 1797. I am no conjuror, I have no specific for national happiness, I offer you nothing made up of conundrums and tricks, but I bring before you what I believe to be a rational and substantial project for the arrangement of our representation, which, I venture to say, has had, during the last sixty years, the sanction and approval of many of the greatest minds and of the greatest patriots of our country. Well, then, what is this change which is to swamp everybody, and that men stand aghast at? Is it that the elective franchise, which is now, both in England and Scotland, confined, in boroughs, to occupiers of a house valued at 10*l*., should be lowered so as to take in, in reality, all the persons who are householders and occupiers of premises which are rated to the relief of the poor? Your system of rating is much more modern in Scotland than ours in England, but I learn that, with two or three inconsiderable exceptions, it is now become uniform throughout the whole of your country. The main reason that I propose this franchise is this. Unfortunately in this country—I mean in Great Britain and Ireland—there is a very large class, which constantly requires the assistance of their fellow-men. There must needs be levied throughout the kingdom, a rate that does not amount to less—at least, in 1856, it amounted to more—than the enormous sum of 7,000,000*l*., raised for the express purpose of giving relief to the poor. Now, I think there is not one of your artisans who, in his walk of life, works hard from mornin till night, six days in the week, wh may have heavy demands at home i his own family, who is called upon t perform all the duties of citizenship who is called upon also to contribut from his own earnings to the suppor of some feeble, some sick, it may b some dissolute and profligate man, wh is not able to support himself,—I thin there is not one of these who is thu called upon to be taxed on his weekl and annual earnings for such purposes that has not some claim to be con sidered a citizen, and to be admitted t the rights of citizenship.

I have been attacked, I am told—fo I have not had time to read half of th attacks which I understand have bee made upon me—I have been attacke as having been guilty of misrepresen tation in stating the custom in Englan with regard to the question of the fran chise. I have said that in England, i our parochial government, in Poor-la Unions, and in our municipal govern ments, the system of rating forms th basis of the elective franchise; and could see no reason why it should no also form the basis of the franchise in th election of Members of Parliament. I a told that with regard to Poor-law Unions and in some cases of parishes, but no universally, there is a mode of voting b which men give votes somewhat in pro portion to their property in the parish where one man can give one vote, an another four or six votes. This is no very pleasant, wherever it is practised to those having a smaller number o votes; but the defence and the pre tended justification of it is that this i a question of expenditure in the imme diate locality, in the making of roads in a variety of objects which are re quired to be attended to by our variou local governments, and that it migh possibly end in throwing a great in equality of expenditure and taxatio upon a particular number, or on a fe individuals in parishes or districts: bu when you come to the question of Par liamentary Reform, where not only taxe

are to be considered, but interests and personal rights, and not taxes only and personal rights only, but all questions affecting the great policy of the country both at home and abroad, I say it would be to cast a most deadly and ineradicable insult upon the working classes of this country if anybody, for one single moment, urged that I should propose to give six votes at the poll for a Member of Parliament, while an operative at my side should be only allowed to give one vote. Until you are prepared to do full justice to the great portion of the unenfranchised classes, I would advise you to allow matters to remain as they are. I am sure that opinion is growing, intelligence is growing, power is growing, combination is growing, and before long it will be seen to be the interest of all those who value the tranquillity of the country and the contentment of the people, that political rights should be widely and honestly distributed among all classes of our countrymen.

There is one other question of the suffrage which, I believe, I have never yet touched upon in any preceding speech, that is, with regard to the possibility of conferring the franchise, in some shape or other, upon those who are not householders, and are not rated, but are what are called lodgers. In England we have no such franchise; in Scotland you have. A person may live in lodgings, for which he pays, when unfurnished, the sum of 10*l.* per annum, which is the rental required for houses to give a vote. In such a case that lodger can claim to have his name put upon the register, and I am told that in Edinburgh about thirty persons are enrolled who are in that condition. If that be so, I suppose there cannot be a difficulty in reducing the sum to some smaller amount, which shall become in some degree accordant with the principle of a general franchise, so based as to place persons of his description on the electoral register.

We come now to the question of the county franchise, in which we have in England a great advantage over you in Scotland. Here the limit is a 10*l.* property and a 50*l.* occupation franchise; but in England we have freehold franchise as low as 40*s.* a-year. I think he would be a most fastidious mortal indeed who thought that the constitution of the British Empire and the safety of anybody would, in the smallest degree, be jeopardised by extending the 40s. franchise to Scotland.

One has to go with remarkable precision over the various topics of this great question, for if, by any chance, I say anything that is not fully explained, it is sure to be explained in a manner favourable to some inconsistency, and if any point is omitted it is generally insinuated that I have seen reason to change my opinions. In Edinburgh, my voice was very bad and the room was densely crowded, and I was anxious not to make a long speech, and I said nothing on the question of the Ballot. It was instantly supposed that I did not hold the same opinions in Edinburgh that I did in Manchester and Birmingham. We will not altogether leave out the Ballot to-night. If the franchise in your boroughs be reduced so much as to double the whole number of your electors, and if it be reduced so much in your counties as to increase by, probably, more than one-half all the number of electors in those counties, I think, if there be any call now for the adoption of the Ballot, that call will be more strong and imperative after such a change in the franchise has been made. I am quite certain that in the district I came from, the county of Lancaster, there is but one opinion on this point amongst the great body of those persons who are hoping, by any Reform Bill, to be admitted within the pale of the Constitution of this country. I think that they would to a very large extent implore the House of Commons not to confer upon them the right of the franchise, unless they conferred upon them also the power which, I believe, the Ballot alone would give them, of exercising that franchise in accordance with their own convictions.

I cannot comprehend why any man should oppose the Ballot. I can understand its importance being exaggerated, but I cannot understand the man who thinks it would be likely to inflict injury upon the country. Every good influence, every legitimate influence, would still exist. The rich man would still be rich and would still be powerful: in the nature of things it must be so. The educated man, the intellectual man, the benevolent man, the man of religious and saintly life, would continue to exercise a most beneficent influence, which the Ballot, I believe, would not in the slightest degree impair; but the influence of the landlord, of the creditor, of the customer—the influence of the strong and unscrupulous mind over the feeble and the fearful—that influence would be as effectually excluded as I believe it could be by any human contrivance whatsoever.

But there is another aspect of the question of the Ballot, which I think is more important than its political one, that is, its moral aspect. How would canvassing be conducted under the Ballot? I do not know how you conduct the canvassing of electors in this great city; I suppose it is not accurately conducted at all; but I will tell you how it is managed in small and moderate boroughs in England. The candidate goes to see as many electors as possible. In calling on any particular elector, the canvassers endeavour to find out his employer, his landlord, some one who has lent him money, or done a kindness to some of his friends, or who has some influence over him, and half a dozen meet together, and though there may be nothing said, the elector knows very well there is somebody in that small number who has done him a benefit for which he expects a return, somebody who has power over him and who expects to be obeyed, and while the object is professedly that of a canvass, it is little better than a demonstration of force and tyranny. Every man who, for want of the Ballot, votes contrary to his convictions, is a demoralized and degraded man. If not so before, he would feel it necessary, for the sustaining of his character, that he should turn round and belie the principles that he has up to that moment held and declared—and assert that he holds contrary principles now, and therefore did not vote against the convictions of his conscience. There is no portion—I can assure this meeting there is not one of the propositions for Reform that have been submitted to the public—there is no other portion that is received with such unanimity, such enthusiasm of resolution, throughout all the meetings in England, as the proposition that the Ballot shall form a portion of the coming Reform.

We come now to that question which, after all, is more difficult than any to which I have referred, and much more difficult of obtaining or carrying through Parliament—viz. the determination as to the mode in which Members shall in future be allotted to electors and constituencies. I presume that any Reform Bill will draw some line, and below that line will disfranchise a number of boroughs, assuming their population to be too small, and the number of electors too limited, and the interests too circumscribed, to justify them in returning a Member to Parliament, and the more of these boroughs that are thus cut off, the larger number of members or seats will Parliament have to distribute among other constituencies. Now, what shall be done with such a borough as Glasgow? Are you content to go on with your brethren in Edinburgh, with a population approaching to half a million—will you go on contentedly returning only four Members to the House of Commons to represent your vast and annually increasing interests and population, whilst a population no greater than yours shall return, as the case may be, fifty, eighty, or a hundred Members elsewhere? You are not the lovers of freedom I take you to be—you do not understand the question as well as I am satisfied you do—you have not resolved

to brace yourselves up for this great contest, as I hope this night you will — if you are content to go on in the same condition of things under which you have been for some time past. I am not about to state what I think is the limit that ought to be taken. Lord John Russell would not continue representation to boroughs with a population under 5000. Others have proposed that in the case of boroughs with a population under 10,000 they should be merged in the counties, and the electors in boroughs become electors in counties, — which would be a vast improvement to the county representation. I will leave this point, for I believe that with regard to my Bill it is not a settled question, and I do not know the intentions of the Government or of anybody else who may take a prominent part in introducing any measure to the House of Commons and the country.

Now, bear in mind, it is possible to make great changes in the representation without the smallest improvement. At a dinner you may go from one bad dish to another; you may go from one unpleasant street to another, from one unprofitable business to another; you may make a very important change in respect to the franchise without any sensible relief; and it is precisely thus we must warn each other about these points of Reform, because it is quite possible that the Government, hampered by their own prejudices and dispositions, hampered by their followers, and conscious that there are some of their opponents who do not want much Reform; it is quite possible that Government may attempt a measure which, while seeming to reform, will leave the state of the representation quite as unsatisfactory as at present. Thus, I maintain, there can be no Reform except on such, or on something like the basis which I have endeavoured to lay down; and I state this the more particularly because I am anxious that all my countrymen who have not investigated the question shall, when any measure is really before them, be in a condition to form an intelligent opinion of it. At present the great body of the working classes of the country are excluded, and I have shown you, from the mode in which electors are crippled and managed, that the great body of the middle classes, if not excluded, are so arranged that they may be said to be almost altogether defrauded. I want to know why the working classes and the middle classes — and I wish we had no such terms, or that we had some better terms, but I mean by them all those persons who compose the vast population of the country below the great privileged and titled classes of society — I want to know why they should not all unite fairly in behalf of the great measure of political Reform to which we are looking forward? Depend upon it a real measure of Reform is as much wanted for the security and for the welfare of the middle classes of society as it is for the operative classes.

There is a great attempt constantly made to frighten the middle classes. They are told that working-men will not be inclined to listen to the advice of those above them in condition, circumstances, and education. Some of you recollect forty years ago, when such a thing as a public political meeting could not be held in Scotland. The ruling classes then held that political meetings were dangerous, that they were absolutely treasonable, that public tranquillity and the security of Government were impossible if Englishmen and Scotchmen were permitted to meet and discuss public affairs. But Reform was carried, and after many years' experience of it, we find that public tranquillity is more firmly established now than at any former period of the history of this country. Twenty-seven years ago the Reform Bill passed. What said the great peers then, some of whom appear to have been recently startled from their somnolent security? What did they say? They said the King's Government could not be carried on, and that from the time when that moderate but great measure of Reform

was passed there would be an end of the greatness and glory of this powerful nation. But what has been the result? Every one of these predictions has been utterly falsified. Twelve or fourteen years ago, when I was here last, what did they tell us of that simple measure of the repeal of the Corn-laws? One great Peer told us that he should leave the country; and one of the labourers who was at the meeting asked, would his lordship take his land along with him? And we are told that not agriculture alone, but manufactures, and all the commerce of the country would be crippled if not destroyed, and that your splendid river, bearing the leviathans of noble architecture constructed on its banks, would return to its former state of a small and pleasant stream,—and, I suppose, that men could catch trout and salmon from the bridge that crossed it. This kind of argument is what Jeremy Bentham has happily described as the hobgoblin argument, a great trick now-a-days to frighten people, lest they should do themselves some good.

Yet to the middle classes—to you, who twenty-seven years ago were pronounced utterly unworthy of the franchise, to you they now say, 'You are the bulwark of our constitution.' You can live in a 10*l.* house, but if you go below to 9*l.*, if you go to 8*l.*, if you go to 7*l.*, the case is considered bad, but it becomes more desperate at 6*l.* and 5*l.*, and the rating franchise is positively revolutionary. I confess I do not believe this. The number of electors under this rating franchise has been very much exaggerated by those who have not examined it. It was stated at a meeting in Edinburgh the other night, by a gentleman whose authority will not be disputed, that the franchise that I propose would raise the number of electors in Edinburgh from 8,000 to nearly 17,000. I presume that in your city you have a greater population than Edinburgh has; but whatever it be, I am satisfied that if we are to take any step, if we are ever to change our representation, I say to every man of the middle classes, to every man who wishes for the stability of institutions,—I say, let us treat the great body of the population with a magnanimous generosity; that our fellow-countrymen of twenty years hence may make an unanimous acknowledgment that generosity in the year 1859 was the path of true statesmanship and of wisdom.

But I observe in some newspaper, I am not sure whether it was one in your city,—it is said that I have failed to show to the working classes how giving them a vote could be of the smallest advantage to them. I believe that it would be of one advantage to them in the way of raising their self-respect. I have seen thousands of men who have no votes, at the nomination of candidates, attending polling-booths, with looks of great anxiety, and often with looks of great dejection. I believe that if the major part of those men were enfranchised, the effect upon their minds and morals and general condition would be obvious and signal. The great secret of raising any man who has been brought up to what may be called the inferior occupations of life, is to find out something to increase his self-respect. If a man becomes possessed with that feeling—if a man sees any way among his fellow-workmen, and in your numerous societies, benevolent or otherwise, by which he can make himself of use—you will at once see the change in the character of the man, and that what was before either stupid or low in his nature seems to be removed or diminished, and you will find that the man has become wiser, and nobler, and happier. I believe that when you admit the general body of our artisans upon the roll of electors, when they can not only attend nominations and hold up their hands and cheer for the successful or popular candidate, but can also go one by one to the polling-booth, and register their votes for the man who shall represent the great interests of Glasgow; my honest, conscientious opinion is, that you will do as much to raise their self-respect, to give them at least the rudi-

ments and elements of the higher class of citizenship, as you can do by all the other means that you now have in operation with a view of improving the condition of the working classes.

But there are other results that will come to this country in case you ever obtain a fair representation of the people. I have been in Scotland a good deal for the last three or four years, and often before then. I have found, in travelling over your country, that your land is not the land of the people of Scotland, but that it is in a position—in a manner exclusive—which is not found to be the case with regard to any other property. It is found in the possession—in comparison to the whole body of the people—of a small handful of proprietors. Let no man say that I am about to assail any landed proprietors in Scotland. I have received many courtesies from them, and not a few courtesies from the most eminent and distinguished among them; I speak only of the system which arises from a Legislature that is diametrically opposed to all the great principles of political economy, which we and you struggled for so many years to place on our statute books in the shape of a wiser legislation in matters of trade. Land is the basis of your industry. Is there any reason why land should not be as free as machinery, or ships, or household furniture, or cattle, or the goods and manufactures in your warehouses? If freedom be the law of right and of wisdom with respect to all these kinds of property, how should the reverse of freedom be any other than the law of mischief and injury when applied to land? You may travel—I was going to say, 'from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof'—on some single estate in Scotland, north or south, east or west—wherever you go you ask whose land you are on, and you are told that it belongs to some marquis or some duke. They are happy mortals, it will be said, who possess this great territory; and so, probably, they would be, if it were possible for any man, however well disposed, to adequately answer the responsibilities which such possessions lay upon him. You find on these vast estates very few tenants, and generally very few of an agricultural population at all. There is little social freedom, there is little industrial freedom, and there is still less political freedom in districts such as those which I am describing. I do not know very well how men can breathe freely when they find themselves continually on a soil not one morsel of which they can call their own, or can ever hope to call their own, until they take their last long sleep in that portion of it which shall finally be allotted to them.

I am no advocate for a law to force the division of land. I do not want any landlord to be compelled to have a greater or smaller number of tenants; but I say that the system of legislation in regard to primogeniture, and on entails and settlements, which is intended to keep vast estates in one hand through successive generations, to prevent that economical disposition and change of property which is found so advantageous in every other kind of property—I say this state of things is full of the most pernicious consequences, not only to the agricultural classes, but to all other classes of our countrymen, since all are affected by it. I recollect one evening seeing a farmer ride away from an hotel in the Highlands, and I asked his name. I was told that he was a farmer in some neighbouring glen, where he had a prodigious farm; and my informant said that there were once fourteen good farms on what is now one farm, and that each of the fourteen families always managed to send at least one of its sons to obtain a first-class University education. Now, I do not want any law to strip that one farmer of his farm; but the law which interferes with the free course of transactions in land, which multiplies and keeps up these vast estates, which gives to one man power over a whole territory, whereby he has at his disposal tenant and labourer alike, is not such a law as is consistent with that freedom to which

the people of England and Scotland are entitled. Your agricultural labouring population have no chance of rising in the world. They can come to Glasgow, as scores of thousands of men have come from the Highlands and from Ireland, or, forced by the unfavourable circumstances in which they find themselves, they may become exiles from their native country, and form colonies in the far Pacific, or beyond the wide Atlantic. But I think we are bound as free men—and we townsmen are especially bound, for we only have the power to take the initiative in this great question—we are bound, so far as we are able, by our representatives in Parliament (and I have no doubt it will be one of the consequences of a real Reform Bill), to apply those great principles of political economy, which are the gospel and the charter of industry, as fully to property in land as we have already applied them to property engaged in trade.

There is another point to which I must call your attention in answer to the question, 'What is the good which the working classes, or any other class, can hope for from a wide extension of the franchise?' Now there is one great question over which the public has no great hold, and that is the question of the public expenditure. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Disraeli, an eminent member of the House of Commons, a leading member of the Government, and a man of genius, whose present position, I must say, is a proclamation to the world of the incompetency of the Conservative aristocracy and country gentlemen of the United Kingdom; and, what is still more to be remarked, is an evidence of the humility which adorns their character in thus admitting it,—Mr. Disraeli said, on more than one recent occasion, that expenditure depended on policy—by which he meant that our public expenditure depended on our foreign policy. Now, our past foreign policy has been of a very questionable character. It has entailed upon us the permanent payment, from which there is no honourable escape, of a sum of 28,000,000*l.* per annum; and our present foreign policy, and matters connected with it, involve us in the present payment of 22,000,000*l.* per annum for our great military and naval preparations and expenses. I am not about for a moment to discuss the question, whether our foreign policy has been, or is now, good, bad, or indifferent, because that does not very much affect the question to which I wish to call your attention. In our home affairs we have a very open system of government. If the Home Office is about to do anything, somebody hears of it, and somebody approves of it, or somebody objects to it. In all matters connected with our personal freedom, with the administration of justice, in all things which may be called internal, we have the freest opportunity of obtaining information, expressing our opinion, and enforcing our views on the Government.

But when you come to our foreign policy, you are no longer Englishmen; you are no longer free; you are recommended not to inquire. If you do, you are told you cannot understand it; you are snubbed, you are hustled aside. We are told that the matter is too deep for common understandings like ours—that there is great mystery about it. We have what is called diplomacy. We have a great many lords engaged in what they call diplomacy. We have a lord in Paris, we have another in Madrid, another in Berlin, another (at least we had till very lately) in Vienna, and another lord in Constantinople; and we have another at Washington; in fact, almost all over the world; particularly where the society is most pleasant, and the climate most agreeable, there is almost certain to be an English nobleman to represent the English Foreign Office, but you never know what he is doing. You have three or four columns every other day in most of the leading London papers—not a little of which is copied into the provincial journals—all about our

foreign affairs, and yet, notwithstanding this, you are not a bit better acquainted with the matter when you read it, if you do read it at all, than you were before. Yet you have the great fact, that you have paid 28,000,000*l.* a-year for more than forty years, and, since the year 1815, more than 1,000,000,000*l.* out of the industry of the population. And out of all this comes the supposed necessity of armaments twice as large as were necessary twenty-five years ago; and yet you have no control over, and know nothing of the matter. There is not a population equal to this in Russia, Austria, or France, that knows less of the foreign affairs of any of those countries than this meeting probably knows of the foreign affairs of England.

Lately, our Minister for Foreign Affairs was candid enough to tell you that Government drifted into war, and you know what is meant when a ship drifts. And other Foreign Ministers have drifted us into a great many wars; and I expect, if some change be not made with regard to this question, that they will either find it convenient, or that they cannot avoid it, from some cause or other, to allow us to drift into a war at some future period. I will not talk of what war is—we have had a specimen of it. Be it necessary or be it unnecessary—be the quarrel just or be it unjust—be it for the rights of the nation or to gratify the stupidity of a monarch or the intrigues of a minister—war, nevertheless, is one of the greatest calamities that can afflict any kingdom or the human race; and you, the people, are ignorant of the steps by which you are drawn into war. A Scotch Duke—and, by the way, rather a sprightly Duke he is too—lately took me to task for something that I had said. I had called in question the wisdom of the policy which compels this vast expenditure abroad, while the people of Ireland were working at one shilling a day for wages, and the people of your own Highlands were living upon three meals of oatmeal a day! What was the triumphant refutation of my argument? This only, that oatmeal was a most wholesome article of diet. If I had said that the Duke's dogs, at Inverary Castle, had been fed upon oatmeal three times a day, the answer would have been perfectly satisfactory.

But I am told further by these authorities, though the country does occasionally become involved in war, that the people desire it, that they are as fond of it as their rulers. Well, if the Peers did sorrow for the late war, they never told their grief. Are the people, are the nation, to have the blame of those calamities thrown upon them when they do occur? Who form your Cabinet? Not the merchants of Glasgow—not the shopkeepers nor the artisans—no, but the members of the peerage of the United Kingdom. Half of your Cabinets are formed from the House of Lords, and the other half from the House of Commons are so directly connected with the peerage that they may be regarded as belonging to that class. Do not let the conduct of public affairs remain with a few leading families, who enjoy all the emoluments and all the power; and when such an one as myself steps forward to point out the blunders they commit, and the crimes they are guilty of, if I tell them of the sufferings which my countrymen have endured, sufferings, the full measure of which never will be known or revealed to us, and which will be known only in eternity, do not let us have it said that the people are in favour of wars, when they have in reality so little to do with them.

It is a curious thing to observe the evils which nations live under, and the submissive spirit with which they yield to them. I have often compared, in my own mind, the people of England with the people of ancient Egypt, and the Foreign Office of this country with the temples of the Egyptians. We are told by those who pass up and down the Nile, that on its banks are grand temples with stately statues and massive and lofty columns—statues each one of which would have appeared almost to have

exhausted a quarry in its production. You have, further, vast chambers, and gloomy passages; and some innermost recess, some holy of holies, in which, when you arrive at it, you find some loathsome reptile which a nation reverenced and revered, and bowed itself down to worship. In our Foreign Office we have no massive columns; we have no statues; but we have a mystery as profound; and in the innermost recesses of it we find some miserable intrigue, in defence of which your fleets are traversing every ocean, your armies are perishing in every clime, and the precious blood of our country's children is squandered as though it had no price. I hope that an improved representation will change all this; that the great portion of our expenditure which is incurred in carrying out the secret and irresponsible doings of our Foreign Office will be placed directly under the free control of a Parliament elected by the great body of the people of the United Kingdom. And then, and not till then, will your industry be secured from that gigantic taxation to which it has been subjected during the last hundred and fifty years.

There is much in this country, notwithstanding, of which we may be proud. We can write freely, we can meet as we are met now, and we can speak freely of our political wishes and our grievances. The ruling classes, with a wise sagacity, have yielded these points without further struggle; but we are so delighted with our personal freedom, we are so pleased that we can move about without passports, and speak, write, and act as freely as a free man requires to do, we are so delighted with all this, that we are unconscious of the fact that our rulers extract from our industry a far larger amount than any other Government does, or ever did, from an equal number of people. Dr. Livingstone, the African traveller, if I am not mistaken, is a native of this neighbourhood, and you no doubt identify his reputation in some degree with your own. He gives, in his interesting and charming book, many anecdotes of the various creatures which he saw and heard of during his travels. He describes in one place, I remember, a bird, which he calls a dull, stupid bird, a kind of pelican, which occupies itself with its own affairs on the river side. This pelican catches fish, and when it has secured them it puts them into a pouch or purse under its bill, instead of the ordinary accommodation which anglers have in Scotland for their prizes. Dr. Livingstone tells of another bird which is neither dull nor stupid, which he calls the fish-hawk. This hawk hovers over the pelican, and waiting patiently until the latter has secured the fish, he comes down upon him with a swoop and takes the fish from the purse, leaving the pelican delighted that the hawk has not taken him bodily away, and setting to work at once to catch another fish.

I ask of you whether you can apply this anecdote to your own case? You are told that your Government is a Government which allows you to meet, and that it lets every man say anything short of absolute treason, at least in times of tranquillity; it permits your leading-article writers to denounce, at will, every member of the Government; and like the pelican, you are so delighted that you are not absolutely eaten up by it, that you allow it to extract from your pockets an incalculable amount of your industry, and you go to work just as the pelican does, until this great Government fish-hawk comes down again upon you. What I want is, that all the people should examine the question thoroughly for themselves. Rely upon it, your present and future welfare as a nation are bound up with it. Many persons suppose that because some people pay but little in the shape of taxation, that it matters nothing to them what taxes the Government imposes upon the nation. Every man who drinks tea, or consumes any exciseable articles, pays taxes; but apart from this view of the question, I would have you to understand that everything which the

Government expends, supposing it was all to come from the employers' pocket, would be a diminution of that great fund of capital out of which wages were paid. Every man, therefore, whether he pays taxes or not—more so, of course, if he does—every man, if he is not mainly living upon the taxes, has a most direct interest in establishing that representation of the people that will give the nation a firm control over the expenditure of its money.

I have devoted many years of my life, I have spent much labour in advocating a greater freedom of the soil. I believe that it would work better and prove more profitable to the landed proprietors themselves. I think that free land, greater economy in the public expenditure, with the growing intelligence which we see all around us, and the improvement which is taking place in the more temperate habits of the people, all these things together fill me with the hope that whatever we have in the annals of the past of which we can boast, there is still a brighter future in store for this country. I come amongst you not to stir up animosity between class and class; that is the charge brought against me by men who wish that one class may permanently rule over every other class. I come amongst you that we may deliberate on those great questions on which our success and our prosperity depend. You know, at least if you do not know it I will tell you, that I am no frequenter of Courts. I have never sought for office or the emoluments of place. I have no craving for popularity. I think I have little of that which may be called the lust for fame. I am a citizen of a free country. I love my country, I love its freedom; but I believe that freedom can only be extended and retained by a fair and honest representation of the people; and it is because I believe this, that I am here to-night to ask you, through the power of your intelligence and your numbers, to step into the position which now opens up before you.

REFORM.

IV.

LORD DERBY'S BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 24, 1859.

From Hansard.

[The Bill proposed by Lord Derby's Government in 1859 introduced certain 'fancy franchises' in boroughs, giving a vote to persons having 10*l.* per annum in the Public Funds, Bank Stock, or India Stock, or 60*l.* in a Savings Bank; and to recipients of pensions in the Naval, Military, and Civil Services, amounting to 20*l.* a-year. Dwellers in a portion of a house whose aggregate rent was 20*l.* a-year could have a vote. The suffrage was also to be given to graduates of the Universities, ministers of religion, members of the legal and medical professions, and to certain schoolmasters. The Government recommended an identity of franchise in counties and boroughs, and therefore proposed to reduce the occupation franchise in counties to 10*l.* The Bill proposed the use of voting-papers, and the disfranchisement of such freeholders in towns as voted for counties. The Government Bill was defeated on April 1 by a majority of 39 (291 votes for the second reading, 330 against), and a dissolution followed.]

In the observations which I am anxious to address to the House I shall endeavour to keep myself strictly to the question before it. I shall not attempt any answer to some, perhaps well-intended, but rather feeble, assaults which have been made upon me during this debate, and I shall not attempt any explanation in answer to what was said by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor-General the other night when he spoke of an alliance between the noble Lord (J. Russell) and myself. That which is purely imaginary is not easy to explain. The House I believe will give me credit when I say that if I am found acting with the noble Lord it is because I think the course he is taking is advantageous to the country, and I hope if I have hereafter occasion to differ from him they will give me credit also, and will presume that I differ from him only because my convictions lead me to [illegible] and future we[illegible]

There are two [illegible]re bound up with it. the Bill of the [illegible]ose that because some resolution of [illegible] little in the shape of addition to [illegible] it matters nothing to them Parliamenta[illegible] the Government imposes more or less [illegible]ion. Every man who drinks who has ad[illegible]mes any exciseable articles, regard to t[illegible] but apart from this view unanimity o[illegible]ion, I would have you to tion of C[illegible] that everything which the

bench, who may be considered in the light of professional witnesses, I believe there is no single Member who has spoken who has not expressed strong repugnance to some main point or principle of the measure. A remarkable speech has been delivered by a right hon. Gentleman on this side of the House. He denounced the Bill as much as if he had been the greatest opponent of hon. Gentlemen opposite, but he was vehemently cheered by the other side of the House throughout almost the whole of that speech. Seeing that he turned the measure inside out, it was rather remarkable that his speech should be so relished by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and considering some of the observations which he made, the right hon. Gentleman certainly suggested a course the most extraordinary. He denounced the Bill as treason, not to the Crown, but to the people, and he proposed to inflict upon it something like the barbarous punishment with which our law, I believe, still visits those who are guilty of this great crime; and yet, after calling on the House to go with him in taking out the heart of the measure, and, for aught I know, in disembowelling it, he comforted himself with the belief that the Government would accept and assist in carrying the Bill. He appeared to forget that the Government had parted with two eminent Colleagues on the very points of difference which he was discussing. He seemed to forget that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer adopted this proposal he would lay himself open to the unfortunate suspicion that a suggestion, to which he would not consent

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I shall not follow the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken on the details of the Bill to the extent to which he has entered upon them. I shall confine myself to the two principles which, after all, are at this stage of the Bill only before us, being brought specifically under discussion by the resolution proposed as an amendment by the noble Lord. I should like to ask the House—because I think there is some disposition to evade this question—what is it that people understand by a measure of Parliamentary Reform? I mean people out of doors, of whom hon. Gentlemen are likely to hear a good deal before this matter is settled. They understand it should mean two things—first, an extension of the franchise to considerable classes, not now enfranchised; and, at the same time, that it should give to the country larger and freer and more independent constituencies. Now, I want to ask how this Bill meets such a demand, because if it does not it is no Reform Bill, the Government had no right to propose it in answer to that demand, and the House of Commons will fail in its duty if it gives any countenance to such a measure, or passes it into a law.

In the counties at this moment, confining myself to England and Wales, to which alone this Bill refers, there are, in round numbers, 500,000 electors, 400,000 of whom are freeholders and 100,000 occupying tenants above the value of 50*l*. Now, is there any doubt upon this point—that if any gentleman were asked to put his finger upon that description of elector in the counties which is most independent, he would say the freeholder; if upon the least independent, he would say of necessity the 50*l*. occupier? Without saying anything against tenant-farmers or the owners of farms themselves, I think this is a description which the House will admit to be fair. Well, the Bill proposes first of all to get rid from the counties of one-fourth, 100,000, of the

most independent class, the freeholders. I am not now speaking of disfranchising them, but of getting rid of them from the counties, and mixing them up with another class of electors. Everybody will see at a glance that if 100,000 of the most independent class of electors are taken from the counties, the less independent class must necessarily be made more powerful.

The Bill makes, to my mind, another proposal of a most insidious character. The boundaries of boroughs are to be altered in a very remarkable fashion. The framers of the Bill seem to imagine that it is necessary for some object of theirs to include within the boundaries of boroughs every individual whom by any pretence they can lay hold of and separate from the county, if they suspect him to be infected with the prevalent opinions of the towns. By this means, of course, they would after the passing of their Bill diminish still more whatever there may be of the independent element in the county constituencies. But now observe the cunning — will right hon. Gentlemen forgive me the expression?—perhaps it was a mistake, like the disfranchisement of 50,000 men —observe the mistake, then, involved in the plan which is to be referred to our intelligent and impartial friend Mr. Darby. I understood that Mr. Darby, the head of the Enclosure Commission, is to appoint a Commission for this object. The question, then, will be referred to him or to somebody. I will admit, if you like, that the Commission is as good as I or anybody in this House could wish. This Commission is not to examine the case of all boroughs. It is merely intended, as I understand it, to shut up within the borough boundaries all the suburbs of our cities and towns, and all immediately contiguous villages. But the Commissioners have no charge to go to another description of borough, and shut up the country parishes within the boundaries of counties. Now, surely, if it was a fair thing to go to any large town and say, 'All these streets and villages shall be comprised within the borough; none of these 10*l.* occupiers shall vote for the county,' it would be a fair thing to go to agricultural boroughs and to say, 'My good fellows, farmers, and so forth, in all these country parishes we are about to make a clear distinction — perpetual enmity between town and county; everybody near a town is to be shut into that town; you must be shut out of the borough, and into the county.'

I will tell the House what will be the result of the proposal in one or two cases. There are at this moment, within the limits of boroughs, farms the rental of which exceeds 2,500,000*l.*, and yet these are called boroughs. We will take the borough represented by the First Lord of the Admiralty. He will speak in this debate, and can correct me if I am wrong. In Droitwich there is an assessment to the income-tax under Schedule A of land and buildings to the amount of 56,000*l.* a-year, of which 39,600*l.* is an assessment of land and farms. There are four town parishes and twelve rural parishes. The town parishes contain one hundred and sixty electors, the rural two hundred and thirty-two electors. In point of fact, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman does not represent a town at all. No, the large majority of his supporters and constituents are farmers and persons as much connected with rural affairs as if they were in the centre of the county and miles away from any towns or villages. I say, if this line is to be drawn, it must be drawn in all cases. Take the case of the borough of Petersfield, which is also represented by an hon. Baronet on the Treasury bench. In that town the case is still more glaring. There is 31,000*l.* assessed in land and buildings in the borough, but of that, 24,000*l.*, or more than four-fifths, is in respect of land and buildings in agricultural parishes. I am not now complaining of those parishes being added to the town; but the Government has no right to propose, and Parliament will never pass, a Bill the only object

of which will be to shut as many as possible in the borough in the one case, but not to interfere in the other, and thus to diminish that great variety of suffrages and of interests which it is desirable that every Member in this House shall represent.

The noble Lord the Secretary of State for India said with regard to the great measure of disfranchisement, that it was a mistake, and that he was sorry the clause was not originally introduced into the Bill which was afterwards laid on the table of the House by his hon. Friend. Again, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, when he was charged with the faulty character of the clause extending the 10*l.* franchise to counties, made rather a staggering admission that this was also in the nature of a mistake, and if it was wrong, that we could likewise go into the question in Committee. But I find everything that has been done has one direction, and one only. I cannot understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when speaking of the painful anxiety with which this Bill has been brought forward, he has not, in all that anxiety and deliberation, discovered that he was going to disfranchise 50,000 of the best electors of the kingdom.

Now, what is the main object of this measure? It is evidently to make the representation of the counties, if possible, more exclusively territorial than it is at present. I ask the House to consider whether that is a desirable object for us to attempt? Ask Lord Lyndhurst —long a leading statesman, acting with Gentlemen opposite; ask Lord Aberdeen. Sir Robert Peel is not here, and you cannot ask him; but you can ask the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carlisle, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer could add his impressive testimony, whether it has not always been the chief difficulty of the Cabinet sitting on that side of the House—I mean with Gentlemen opposite, for many years, far longer than I have been a politician—that they were supported by one hundred and fifty or more Gentlemen representing the counties, and elected very much in the way described by Lord Derby, and, being supported by that party, whether they have not found it utterly impossible, without doing that which was very unpleasant, or without ruining themselves, which is unpleasant to a Government, to propose or carry any of those measures which were made necessary by the opinions and demands of the country.

Do not let Gentlemen opposite suppose that I am finding fault individually with any one of them in this matter. From 1842 to 1846, what was the difficulty which the Government of Sir Robert Peel constantly found in its way? Of that, I dare say, the right hon. Baronet the Member for Carlisle could give us a graphic and instructive description. What became of that Government of 1846? There was a disruption which resulted in years of anarchy in this House. But go back to the experience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1852. The then Government was broken up by a majority of nineteen votes in this House after a general election, because it was necessary, in order to satisfy the expectations and demands of that same party sitting behind them, to propose a Bill with regard to the malt-tax, for which, on the whole, the country certainly made no demand, and to which the House was not willing to consent. I was then very sorry for Lord Derby, and I never, except once, gave a vote which I more regretted to have to record than on that occasion; but the Government could not alter or withdraw their proposition, because the one hundred and fifty Gentlemen behind them thought it necessary that such a measure should pass, and now we find the right hon. Gentleman in the same position.

Does any man believe that this is the sort of Bill that the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks best for the country? Does any one suppose that a man with his intellect, and who understands all the bearings of this question, approves of—I will not say the 'deplorable rubbish,' but the grievous and fatal mis-

takes to be found in the clauses of this Bill? He knows that this Bill in its present shape is a Bill framed to satisfy the prejudices, the scruples, the convictions, if you like, and the fears of the one hundred and fifty country Gentlemen who sit behind him. I should think it a great misfortune to have one hundred and fifty Gentlemen here, representing only ironworks, or only ships, or only the cotton and woollen factories of Lancashire and Yorkshire. I believe it is almost essential to a good Member of this House, so far as it depends on external circumstances, that he should have among his constituents a variety of what the Chancellor of the Exchequer would call 'interests,' persons of various classes, occupations, and opinions. I think they keep him better to his duty, modify his opinions, and make him a more valuable Member of the House than he is likely to be if he represented only some special interest.

I must say one word about that charming part of our institutions of which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Walpole) has spoken in such affectionate terms. I mean the small boroughs. They are the jewels of our representative system. Putting the case in the smallest number of words, you say that they send men into Parliament who cannot get in anywhere else. In one of them a boy was put in at nineteen. That is considered a great argument for perpetuating such a system. These boroughs form, in point of fact, a refuge for the politically destitute; and all that I have heard in their favour is that the persons who find shelter in them are what would be called 'deserving objects.' Now, the right hon. Gentleman, I dare say, reads the papers as well and as studiously as I do; and he will perhaps recollect a case or two which I will state to the House. There was an election at Harwich the other day. It is not long since there was an election there, and I remember a statement made at the time. It was said that Mr. Bagshaw—not now a member of this House—had discharged a drunken gardener. There were two free-traders who had carried out their principles further than the law sanctioned, and were imprisoned for smuggling. A respectable parson of the parish, who had not been out of his room for two years, was brought down (by the aid of cordials, stimulants, and a sedan-chair) to the poll, and those four individuals influenced the result of the election. Now, go to another borough. I recollect an election for the borough of Carlow. There were two troops of dragoons, two companies of infantry, and one hundred and fifty police; the whole of this force having, during the period of the election, been engaged in keeping the peace in a town which comprised only two hundred electors. Now, notwithstanding the picture which I have drawn of these small boroughs, I must not be understood as saying that virtuous elections do not take place in some of this class, and that they do not still retain some remnant of freedom. But if there be any virtue or freedom left in them, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not content with corrupting and maltreating them in every way, defaces the fair form of your county representation, and lays his sacrilegious hands upon those very spots about which everybody but myself just now speaks in such very high terms.

I should like to give the House an instance of the justice of what I state. There has been an election at Banbury. It is but the other day that the hon. Gentleman who represents that place took his seat in this House. Banbury is a borough which I do not propose to disfranchise, but it is one which everybody who knows its size must admit to be possessed of singular independence of action in political affairs. I believe the hon. Gentleman who at present represents it will admit that to be the fact. Now, just imagine what the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will lead to in the case of Banbury. Imagine, if you can, the people of that

borough making speeches, canvassing, explaining their political views, and resolving upon the proper fulfilment of their political duties. Well, all this is taking place, but at the critical moment you may see a man—for aught I know he may be the concocter of this Bill—for it appears to me to be not so much the Bill of a statesman as of some party electioneering agent—you may see, I repeat, a man of this description, emerging after dark from the Carlton Club, proceeding to a pillar letter-box which stands quite near it upon the opposite side of the street, and dropping into it—unless, indeed, he should find it necessary to go as far as Charing Cross for the purpose of registering them—some ten or twenty letters about nine or ten o'clock in the evening, while the unfortunate people of Banbury are labouring under the delusion that they are carrying on a great constitutional contest. Unhappy men, they little know that the resistless locomotive engine has been set to work; that it is rushing down through county after county; and that they will awake the next morning only to find out that, through the instrumentality of a leathern bag, which has just been deposited at the post-office, somebody is returned as their representative who has not the slightest sympathy with their interests.

But this is no new thing. If anybody will turn to the report of the Municipal Corporation Commissioners in 1834, he will there find a statement made by Mr. Austin in reference to the borough of Carmarthen; in which he gives the number of resident and non-resident freeholders not of the value of 40s., but of 4*l*., and, in addition, the number of 10*l*. occupiers. The number of burgesses in the borough he sets down at 646; resident in the borough, 178; outside the borough, but still within the county, 257; in the county of Pembroke, 108; in Glamorgan, 31; in Cardigan, 25; in Brecon, 12; and outside the limits of South Wales altogether, 35: so that, while the number of resident was 178, the number of non-resident electors was 468. Mr. Austin then gives a list of voters at a contest which had taken place for the election of sheriffs, when 131 votes were recorded in favour of the corporation candidates, against them 51; thus giving a majority in their favour of 80, of which majority 75 were non-resident electors. The commissioner then goes on to say, 'In effect, therefore, the constant majority is a majority of non-residents, who, with rare exceptions, are supporters of the corporation party.' Now, let me ask if this system prevailed in the case of a 4*l*., is it not likely to prevail in the case of a 2*l*. freehold? It must also be observed that in the former instance the votes could not be recorded by letter. The voter had to appear in person at the place of election; but if this system of voting-papers be adopted in addition to non-residence, I know no limit whatever to the amount of corruption which it may occasion. You cannot therefore, in my opinion, too strongly express your sense of the entire extinction of freedom which this scheme is calculated to produce in all the small boroughs of the country.

There is also another point which a large portion of our fellow-countrymen regard as of the utmost importance, and to which I may be permitted briefly to refer. I allude to the borough franchise. I have endeavoured to show that the effect of the Bill as it now stands will be to render counties more exclusive, and to hand over the small boroughs to rottenness and complete dependence; for the only independence they could possess must rest upon the opinions and wishes of non-resident electors. I am not going to discuss this question in any different tone from that which has hitherto marked this debate; but I would ask the House whence comes it that we are here to-night discussing the question of Reform at all? There are plenty of other things for us to do. Why, then, is this question thrust upon us by Minister after Minister? Some persons say that the noble Lord the Member for London is

entirely in fault. Hon. Gentlemen may say whatever they like, but such an assertion as that goes but a very little way indeed. The noble Lord has no particular desire, any more than I have, to disturb the great question. Its settlement, however, has become a necessity, and will continue to be a necessity to the existence of every Government, until it is set at rest in a manner that will be satisfactory to the country. [Cheers.] Do hon. Gentlemen by their cheers mean to show us that they do not want Reform? The Government have not touched this question simply in obedience to the commands of their followers, although they have brought in this Bill in accordance with their prejudices and their fears. The farmers do not ask you for Reform, although there are, no doubt, some respects in which they desire it. The farm-labourer does not press it upon your attention. No, the demand for Reform comes from all your towns and cities; nor is the cry heard from the mouths of the unenfranchised alone, but, in point of fact, from the great majority of the electors themselves.

It is not an uncommon thing to hear it asserted—as several hon. Members have asserted in this House—that the electors of this country do not care for Reform. ['Hear, hear.'] Those hon. Gentlemen who cry 'Hear, hear,' do not know quite so much as I do about the sentiments of people residing in towns. When the electoral power was in the hands of a few corrupt corporations the case may have been otherwise, for they turned their electoral privileges into a means of annual profit, and did not like to share them with their fellow-townsmen. But I never heard it made a charge against the electors in boroughs, at the present day, that they were anxious to retain the franchise for fear of admitting others of their fellow-countrymen to be sharers, or rivals, or participators with them in the advantages which it comprises. The Government, it seems, do not think it necessary to make any change in the borough franchise. We all know that the line which was drawn in 1832 was drawn in direct and almost absolute exclusion of all that class of persons who live by wages. Has it been a source of satisfaction to them? Have there not, upon the contrary, been constant protests against it? Have we not seen and heard—when there was great depression in trade, and a great scarcity of food, which now, happily, is not the case—these constant protests aggravated into something like incipient insurrection? That such has been the case is not to be denied. Well, and what is that you now do? Twenty-seven years after the passing of the great Reform Bill, and after a whole generation has passed away, you propose to continue, it may be for twenty-seven years longer, that exclusion against which the great body of the unenfranchised population of the country have been lifting up their voices ever since 1832.

What is it that Her Majesty's Ministers say to us in introducing this measure? What will this House in effect say if it passes it into a law in its present shape? You proclaim, in a voice which will reach the farthest corner of the land, that will enter not only into the ear but into the heart of the inhabitants of every home of the class of which I am speaking in England—that we have something in our legislature which they cannot comprehend and must not intermeddle with. You will in effect say to them, 'We do not trust you, you are as ignorant, as dangerous, as little to be relied upon now as you were twenty-seven years ago.' And what will be the result? They will come to the conclusion that upon the same principle upon which you now act you will act for the next twenty-seven years, using precisely the same arguments and pursuing the same course.

And now let me pause for one moment to ask what sort of a generation that has been which is just passing, or has passed, away? My answer is, such a one as was never known before. You have had under its auspices a longer period of peace than you ever previ-

ously enjoyed. The humbler classes have had a larger proportion of the comforts and necessaries of life than at a preceding period. They have improved at a rate of which your grandfathers scarcely dared to dream. You have a free press—though there may be something still to be done in order that it may become completely unfettered—a subject to which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be good enough to turn his attention when he gets out of the little difficulty in which he is now placed. You have not only the ordinary number of public journals, but you have 300 newspapers published at the price of 1*d.*, circulating all over the country. All this has been accomplished; yet you propose to exclude the members of that class to whom you are indebted for much of your prosperity—with the exception of the trifling numbers whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his small mercy, proposes to admit under the savings-bank clause—from the exercise of the franchise.

I saw a statement the other day, to the effect that the operation of such a clause applied to Scotland would be to give Edinburgh about 300, and all Scotland not more than 600 additional voters. The borough electors are 50,000, and this extraordinary extension of the franchise will admit 2½ per cent. increase, and that is all the small dole which the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his friends offer to the great body of the working classes of that country. Scotland is a frugal country; its people are industrious and saving to a degree which is hardly comprehended here, and yet this boon will only enfranchise some 1200 persons there. I am prepared to assert that this is not a Bill of Reform at all. It is, in point of fact, that which, in electioneering phrase, is considered a complete case of personation. It is not the genius of Liberty that comes before us in the shape of this Bill, but it is something which the people of this country had hoped they had seen and heard of for the last time in our history. I think if it were to pass, that it would be held by the whole population of the country to be nothing better than a complete delusion, disappointing every class, and tending to create discontent, which this House would have great difficulty hereafter in allaying.

There is one point which has been dwelt upon by the right hon. Gentleman opposite and others, in which I do not feel the same extraordinary interest which some Members appear to feel, and that is as to the uniformity of franchise. I do not say that it is necessary—I do not say that there is any advantage in it—but I do not see the great disadvantages which have been ascribed to it. It has been represented to me as a very democratic proceeding. I am not myself very democratic—therefore I can assure the House the scheme has not on that account any charms for me. I think it would have been just as well not to have had this uniformity; but I do not see any harm there is in it. There is only one reason why we should complain of it, and that is, that it would not be so easy again to move the whole franchise hereafter as it would be if the county franchise were different from that of the boroughs. But I can assure hon. Members that if they tie the two together, there is no power in this House to keep the borough franchise at 10*l.*, and unless they give up the idea of uniformity the county franchise must come down with that of the boroughs. However, that is a matter for hon. Gentlemen opposite to consider, and no doubt it has been considered by Her Majesty's Government.

But if I have no alarm about that, there is one thing that I have some alarm about, and that is the manner in which some Members of the House seem disposed to treat this question. I refer particularly to my hon. Friend near me (Mr. Horsman), the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wilts (Mr. S. Herbert), and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Coventry (Mr. Ellice), who has not spoken in this debate, but who wrote a letter to his constituents

upon the subject. The right hon. Gentleman is an extraordinary instance of what I may call hallucination. He represents the greatest number of working-men to be found in any constituency—out of a population of 40,000 there are 6000 electors, which is a far larger number than I thought of proposing to the House. My right hon. Friend says there is no constituency that he knows which equals his in independence, in intelligence, in virtue. I cannot admit all that. I know something of Coventry—my father was born there—but I never heard nor ever observed that the people of that town were upon the whole very superior. I believe they are in no degree inferior to the same classes in other manufacturing towns. My right hon. Friend says he is in favour of household suffrage, but as the people are not ready for that, he will do nothing,—he will have household suffrage or nothing; which, after all, is very much like the suffrage proposed in what was called the 'People's Charter.'

I am alarmed that the right hon. Gentleman, like the Members for Wilts and Devonport, should, in the face of a hundred meetings held spontaneously within the last month, delude himself with the idea that nobody, beyond the 650 Gentlemen in this House, cares anything about this question, and that we may comfortably get rid of it in some way here, by digging a hole in the floor of the House and burying it, as nobody cares about it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University (Mr. Walpole) has the same notion. He thinks it must be settled this session—that it can be—that it is necessary that it should be settled. Why? For this reason, because you know that the form in which you propose to settle it will not be satisfactory to the people. You know well—I think the right hon. Gentleman has confessed it, as some have—that during the autumn you may have meetings—during the winter you may have agitation. And, what would this country have been without meetings, without agitation? We boast that we have abolished our ancient and barbarous mode of making extensive revolutions and changes in our political system, but if you have done with war and bloodshed for these purposes, do not imagine that those changes which become necessary from time to time can be accomplished without the healthy operation, in some cases perhaps of a rude, but still a refreshing and strengthening agitation.

Some Gentlemen opposite seem to forget some things that happened fifteen years ago. Then their organization was complete. They had farmers' meetings everywhere. And, not content with farmers' meetings, they had an office in Old Bond-street, and a Publication Committee, and they had every description of instrument for an irritating and exasperating agitation which they could possibly devise. I do not imagine for a moment that this question can, in the present temper of the House, be settled satisfactorily to the people. Are you quite sure that there is nothing in what is going on out of doors? I met a right hon. Gentleman the other day near the House, and he said to me as a great secret, 'You know, of course, that nobody does care about Reform?' I did not agree with him upon that point. I happen to have been to some of the largest towns of this country, and I have seen meetings exceeding in number and exceeding in influence, I believe, almost every meeting that was held by the Anti-Corn-law League during the agitation for the repeal of the Corn-laws.

The populations you are about to disappoint and defy,—what have they done? They have conquered everything they have grappled with hitherto. I do not speak of distant realms conquered under your banners, but of arts and manufactures, and all that tends to wealth and civilization. Do you think that this population will not also conquer a much larger share of their political rights than in your present mood you appear disposed to give them? There was a speech made by the hon.

Member for Dorset, and I agree with those who have expressed regret that that Gentleman does not speak more frequently; but, in that speech the hon. Gentleman said, 'I am not afraid of the people of this country.' And he gave a very powerful, and eloquent, and just rebuke to a Gentleman who, in a thoughtless moment, cheered his observation in a sneering manner. I tell the House frankly that they do not well understand the great populations of this country, especially of the manufacturing towns.

I have seen great mistakes made. I remember, in 1848, when the right hon. Gentleman above me (Sir G. Grey) was Home Secretary, there was a great panic on the 10th of April—or rather before the 10th of April, for by that day the panic was laughed at. And, what was done? I do not know what was done at the Bank, but I am told that at the British Museum that institution was actually garrisoned. There were no Minié rifles or Armstrong guns, perhaps, but there were a hundred or two hundred tons of paving-stones, or boulders, taken up to the roof of the Museum. Not only was it garrisoned, but, very properly, the commissariat was attended to, and provisions for three days were laid in, and I am told the steps leading to the rooms where the medals and most precious articles are kept were cut away. The British Museum was not assaulted, but the garrison, I believe, managed to consume the three days' provisions before Sunday.

Now come to a later time—the period of the Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851. There was then alive a man who stood pre-eminent in this country, the Duke of Wellington. He was terrified—a man who was supposed never to have been alarmed,—he was alarmed at the people of his own country. He urged upon the Government, who of course agreed with him, to draw near the metropolis a large number of troops in case of emergency. If half-a-dozen foreigners had attempted to get up an insurrection in London they would have been put into the reservoirs in Trafalgar Square by the people themselves, and yet it was considered necessary to bring these troops near to London, to be ready in case of disturbance. I remember the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (Lord Palmerston) once gave us an account of what some foreigner told him as to the conduct and deportment of the masses of the people. The noble Lord knows a good deal of the character of the people, and he said, 'All this order is the result of a sense among the people that they have a Government which, upon the whole, does not intend to oppress them; that they are a people good in themselves, intelligent, and orderly, and that a policeman among them is an authority of high dignity, whom they at once obey.' The remark is creditable to the noble Lord's good taste, and is perfectly just to the people of this country.

I ask hon. Gentlemen opposite why they are so afraid of the people? The manufacturing, the employing class, does not fear them. At the Bradford meeting there were present when I moved the resolution, Mr. Titus Salt and Mr. Crossley, the brother of the Member for Halifax. Those Gentlemen conduct vast manufacturing and commercial undertakings. There are no men more prosperous, and none have more confidence in the people. Those two Gentlemen agreed cordially with every proposition I made as to an extension of the suffrage. The meetings at Rochdale, Bury, Blackburn, and Bolton were attended by Gentlemen almost equally eminent; at the meeting at Bolton there were four Gentlemen who employ not less than 6000 or 7000 people, and who own property of not less than a million sterling; one of those Gentlemen thought my proposal as to the suffrage was not sufficiently extensive. Why is it they do not regard the people with the same fears that you do? They must know what they are about; they know that any convulsion or disturbance in society would touch them first. Your landed

estates are much more permanent as property than our manufactories. Any disturbance or violent action of a democratic nature would be more dangerous to us than to you. Yet a large proportion of the employers of labour favour a large extension of the suffrage, and believe it would prove for the safety of their property; for the working-men, in thinking over this question, feel they are distrusted, that they are marked as inferiors, that they are a sort of pariahs. In that position, should there be an opportunity, great discontent and turbulence might arise; but if you give them a vote they will have more self-respect, more elevation of mind.

I will read an extract from a letter I have received from a working man—I believe a stonemason—on the question whether or not working-men have any interest in the country. He says:—

'But some say that we, as working-men, have no stake and no interest in the country. I hardly know what is meant by these assertions; but if to make sacrifices for the good of our country be any proof of an interest, I believe the working classes can clearly show greater sacrifices, and fairly claim to have greater stake and interest both in the country and in good government. I had three uncles who all lost their lives fighting for their country; I had three brothers, two of whom served under Lord Wellington throughout the Peninsular campaign; and my third and youngest brother lost his life in the Indian war, and now lies buried at Kurnaul. I had two nephews, one of whom died of the cholera at Varna, and the other, after serving throughout the Crimean war, was raised from the ranks, and is now a lieutenant. No doubt but very many working-men could tell of even greater sacrifices and similar tales of their families, except the last. To these statements I would only add, that if the working classes have no stake and no interest in their country, they must be wonderful lovers of their country for nothing.'

There is only one other point to which I will allude; it was touched upon by the Solicitor-General when he referred to the state of Europe; he warned the House to beware what it was about to do in regard to this question. I draw quite a different lesson, a different conclusion, from what he said of the state of Europe. In 1830 there was also a state of Europe and especially of France that was not satisfactory, and it had great effect on the legislation of this House, in the course of the two succeeding years, on the question of Reform. In 1848 the state of Europe was again unsatisfactory, and was it not a subject of congratulation that two years before the Corn-laws had been abolished, and one great cause of discontent removed? I assure you that resistance is not always Conservative. I profess to be, in intention, as Conservative as you,—I believe, infinitely more so, if you look forward twenty or thirty years into the future. Was not Free-trade Conservative? And yet you resisted it to the last. I recollect occasions when the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us of the cruelty practised on the ruined and betrayed agriculturist. I recollect he addressed us on the condition of the farm-labourer two or three years afterwards; and since that time his condition has been improving rapidly. Is not prosperity Conservative? Is not peace Conservative? Any energies I possess I have devoted to their advance; I have endeavoured to stand on the rules of Political Economy, and to be guided by the higher rules of true Morality; and when advocating a measure of Reform larger than some are prepared to grant, I appear in that character, for I believe a substantial measure of Reform would elevate and strengthen the character of our population; that, in the language of the beautiful prayer read here every day, it would tend 'to knit together the hearts of all persons and estates within this realm.' I believe it would add to the authority of the decisions of Parliament; and I feel satisfied it would confer a lustre, which time could never dim, on that benignant reign under which we have the happiness to live.

REFORM.

V.

BIRMINGHAM, JANUARY 18, 1865.

[This speech was spoken in the Town Hall of Birmingham at a meeting when, according to annual custom, the Members for Birmingham met their constituents to discuss the political questions of the day.]

When my honourable Colleague and myself had the pleasure last year of meeting you in this hall, there was one subject which was pressing upon the minds of all of us, and causing us great disquietude. We were encompassed by rumours of war. A small State in the North of Europe was surrounded by difficulties—mainly, I am afraid, of its own creation—and it was assailed with what, in this country, we thought almost a savage vindictiveness by a powerful people comprising one vast empire and several kingdoms. We were not disposed to go into the contest, and to mingle in that war; and you will recollect that my honourable Colleague spoke in the most emphatic language against the idea that we should enter into a war—first, with Germany, and perhaps, afterwards, with some other States of Europe, on behalf of Denmark. And, following him, I used these words—speaking now from my recollection of them—I said that any Government in England that plunged us into war for the sake of Denmark would deserve not only the condemnation but the execration of the people.

But still, although we took so decided a view, we cannot conceal from ourselves that there was a certain restlessness in the public mind; it was observed that those newspapers in London particularly which are supposed to represent the Government, were strongly urging the country to war, and the papers which are supposed to represent the Opposition were urging the Government to the same course, no doubt with the kindly intention of embarrassing and destroying the Ministry. But we had to recollect that at the head of the Government, as it exists, are two very ancient statesmen—the Prime Minister and the head of the Foreign Office; and, remembering that but ten years ago they were the Ministers mainly responsible for the war with Russia, we could not but feel that the danger which impended over us was not wholly imaginary. How we escaped the war people seem hardly to know. Some say that the Queen was very much opposed to a war with Germany—as doubtless she would be opposed to any war which she believed could possibly be avoided—and, if we owe our chances of peace to the opinion of the Queen, for my part, I say with gladness that I am

are recorded the sufferings which the theory of the balance of power has entailed upon this country. It rises up before me when I think of it as a ghastly phantom which during one hundred and seventy years, whilst it has been worshipped in this country, has loaded the nation with debt and with taxes, has sacrificed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Englishmen, has desolated the homes of millions of families, and has left us, as the great result of the profligate expenditure which it has caused, a doubled peerage at one end of the social scale, and far more than a doubled pauperism at the other. I am very glad to be here to-night, amongst other things, to be able to say that we may rejoice that this foul idol—fouler than any heathen tribe ever worshipped—has at last been thrown down, and that there is one superstition less which has its hold upon the minds of English statesmen and of the English people.

And if this be true, surely my hon. Friend need not be so very careful to guard his observations with regard to the diminution of armaments; for if it be now determined that we are not to send armies to the continent of Europe, and fleets to blockade ports and people with whom we have no concern, and if the British North American Colonies are about to make themselves into a great and powerful confederation still in friendly alliance with this country, and if the colonies of Australia are so distant and so powerful that nobody can molest them, and if the people of these islands are better fed—as I believe they are better fed than they have been for the last eighty years—I say, that if they are more loyal to the law and more friendly to every good institution of the country, there is no necessity whatsoever to extend the annual military expenditure, which is double that which the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel thought necessary five and twenty years ago.

There is one other thing to say. If we are not this next session to discuss the question of Denmark, the question of Italy, and the question of America what are we to discuss? It is quite clear to me that whether we have more disposition or not, we shall have a good deal more time to discuss our home affairs. Now what is the question which some gentlemen who have been eating a very good dinner and making very foolish speeches at Torquay,—what is the question which I think Lord Devon says—copying the language of his leader Mr. Disraeli—is 'looming in the not distant future?' what is the question that will not go to sleep? And, let me remind you of this, that really great questions that affect the true and lasting interests and rights of men, never can be laid fast asleep; they always, somehow or other, wake up again. There is a startling exemplification of this in what is now taking place in the United States. You know that for thirty years past the statesmen of the United States have voted the negro a very great nuisance; they said they would not talk about him; some of them would not have petitions about him in Congress; they swore each other to silence; the negro's business was to grow rice, and sugar, and tobacco, and cotton, but not to make his appearance on the floor of Congress, and therefore they determined to have done with him and to bury the question, and they congratulated the country that it was buried. And now after a few years you see North and South—both responsible for the oppression of the negro—in the most deadly conflict, and the negro stands forth in vast proportions before the world. He is rubbing the marks of the branding-iron from his forehead, the shackles which have bound him so long are dropping from his limbs, and the chattel which was bought and sold by these statesmen is now becoming every day a free man before the world.

Well, then, there is this question that will not sleep—the question of the admission of the people of this country to the rights which are guaranteed to them and promised to them by everything

that we comprehend as the constitution of this United Kingdom. In 1861, as my hon. Friend has described to you—and I listened to his observations with very great pleasure, because some persons may suppose that he takes a calmer view of this question than I do—that great question of Parliamentary Reform was also voted a nuisance; and it was betrayed, and it was slain, and they thought it was buried. And, when I use the word 'betrayed,' do not suppose I am using a word of improper harshness to the Minister or the Ministers concerned. My hon. Friend said truly enough that a measure of that kind being submitted to Parliament, the Minister or Ministers by whom it was presented should be prepared to stand or fall by it. I was reading only within the last few days a very interesting book, *The History of the Passing of the Reform Bill*, written by an estimable clergyman in my neighbourhood—Mr. Molesworth, son of the Vicar of Rochdale—a book which you would do well to look at if it comes in your way; and there I find that Lord Grey—the Lord Grey of the time—did not stand before the House of Lords, with a smirk, and that kind of look about him which led them to believe that he did not mean it, but told them, in language as distinct and emphatic as our English tongue affords, that the Ministry would stand or fall by that measure; and, more, that if it were their business and duty to bring in another Bill, if that should be rejected, it would not be less efficient than that which they were then discussing.

There is not a man in the House of Commons who was there in 1860, who knows anything at all of the manner in which Bills and questions are treated there,—and there is not a man in the present Cabinet, who does not know perfectly well that if Lord Palmerston had said on some one evening in the year 1860, that his Government would stand or fall by the Reform Bill then before the House, that Bill would have passed through the House of Commons without one single effective hostile division; nay, I have heard it from an authority, that I believe cannot err upon this question, that the sagacious leaders of the House of Lords had resolved that if the Bill did come up from the Commons they would not take the responsibility of rejecting it.

That Bill or question is not dead; it takes shape again, and you perceive that the Tories, and those Whigs who are like Tories—all Whigs are not like Tories, therefore I make the distinction—the Tories, and those Whigs who are like Tories, have an uncomfortable feeling which approaches almost to a shiver. What is this apparition which alarms them? If I were not wishful to say something different from that to which it would lead me, I should be tempted to read you those speeches at the Torquay dinner to show you what it is that they are afraid of. I will tell you what it is. They are afraid of the five or six millions of Englishmen, grown-up men who are allowed to marry, to keep house, to rear children, who are expected to earn their living, who pay taxes, who must obey the law, who must be citizens in all honourable conduct—they are afraid of the five or six millions who by the present system of representation are shut out, and insultingly shut out, from the commonest rights of citizenship.

We are proud of our country; and there are many things in it which, as far as men may rightly be proud, we may be proud of. We may be proud of this, that England is the ancient country of Parliaments. We have had here, with scarcely an intermission, Parliaments meeting constantly for six hundred years; and doubtless there was something of a Parliament even before the Conquest. England is the mother of Parliaments. I will undertake to say, with a little latitude of expression, that Lord John Russell, before he abandoned the cause of Reform—perhaps even since—talked very much in the daytime, and in all probability dreamt in the night, of the time when all

countries in Europe would be strictly constitutional, and there would be a representative assembly after his own heart. If this be so, I ask you, men of Birmingham here—a fair representation of the great mass of the five millions throughout the United Kingdom—I ask you why you should be thus treated in your own land? You know the boast we have of what takes place when negro-slaves land in England; you know what one of our best poets has said, that if their lungs but breathe our air, that moment they are free; they touch our country, and their shackles fall. But how is it with an Englishman? An Englishman, if he goes to the Cape, can vote; if he goes further, to Australia, to the nascent empires of the New World, he can vote; if he goes to the Canadian Confederation, he can vote; and if he goes to those grandest colonies of England not now dependent upon the English Crown, there, in twenty free, and, in the whole, in thirty-five different States, he can give his free and independent vote. It is only in his own country, on his own soil, where he was born, the very soil which he has enriched with his labour and with the sweat of his brow, that he is denied this right which in every other community of Englishmen in the world would be freely accorded to him.

I agree very much with the gentlemen of the Torquay dinner, not as to the quality of the dinner, but as to that apparition which seemed to alarm even their formidable and robust digestion. This apparition is not a pleasant one. This state of things I hold to be dangerous, and one that cannot last. It may happen, as it happened thirty years ago, that the eyes of the five millions all through the United Kingdom may be fixed with an intense glare upon the doors of Parliament; it was so in the years 1831–32. There are men in this room who felt then, and know now, that it required but an accident—but one spark to the train, and this country would have been in the throes of revolution; and these gentlemen who are so alarmed now lest a man who lives in a 10*l.* house in a county, and a 6*l.* house in a borough, should have a vote, would have repented in sackcloth and ashes that they had ever said one word or given one vote against Lord Grey's Reform Bill. I say that accidents always are happening, not to individuals only, but to nations. It was the accident of the French Revolution of 1830 that preceded that great movement in this country. You may have accidents again, but I do not hold that to be statesmanship which allows the security, the tranquillity, the loyalty of a people to be disturbed by any accident which they are able to control. If the five millions should once unitedly fix their eyes with an intense look upon the door of that House where my hon. Friend and I expect so soon to enter, I would ask who shall say them nay? Not the mace upon the table of the House; not the four hundred easy gentlemen of the House of Lords who lounge in and out of that decorated chamber; not the dozen gentlemen who call themselves statesmen, and who meet in Downing-street; perhaps not even those more appalling and more menacing personages who have their lodgment higher up Whitehall. I say there is no power in this country, as opinion now stands, and as combination is now possible, there is no power in this country that can say 'Nay' for one single week to the five millions, if they are intent upon making their way within the doors of Parliament. This is the apparition which frightens the gentlemen at Torquay—the climate of Torquay, I have always heard, is somewhat relaxing, and we may make a little allowance for that nervous excitement which was exhibited last week.

But it gives trouble, this apparition gives trouble in other quarters, to which I would pay more respect. It is evident from the books, and the pamphlets, and the letters that are written, and the speeches that are made upon it. Everybody who does not want Reform says that nobody wants Reform, and though

this is a subject which they say the people do not care about, they immediately begin upon it and make it the staple of their own speeches. Two gentlemen have recently come before the public on this subject, whom I would not class with those of whom I have been speaking. One is Mr. Charles Buxton, the Member for Maidstone; he is a very honest and excellent person, but, after the proposition he has made, I should be slow to affirm that he is a robust politician. Mr. Buxton has put forward a scheme which I will pass from after one sentence, and that is that two of your townsmen shall go up to the poll at the next election, and one of them shall give one vote to Mr. Scholefield and myself, or to any two candidates he may prefer; and the other shall give two votes to each of such candidates as he shall prefer; and the only justification is that one lives in a house above 10*l.* rental, and the other in a house below 10*l.* I was very much surprised that any man in political life should have propounded such a scheme. He found, what he ought to have thought of before, that no one was in favour of it.

The other gentleman on whom I would make an observation is a Member of the House of Lords, the son of that Lord Grey of whom I have been speaking—the Lord Grey of the present time. Now Lord Grey is an eminent and a very capable man; everything that he says at least demands an examination. I have a great respect for Lord Grey for two special reasons. I heard him make a speech in the House of Commons, when he was there as Lord Howick, against the Corn-law, and he quoted a grand and solemn passage of Scripture against that atrocious law—and the Protectionists said that it was very vulgar to quote Scripture on such a subject. Lord Grey again made a great speech in the House of Lords against the Russian war, and that showed some moral courage, and from my view of that question, I think it showed both intelligence and patriotism. Therefore I come to the consideration of anything he says with the most favourable feeling towards him.

Lord Grey, I said, is very capable—that is, capable with things that are possible; but like myself, or like you, he is not capable with the impossible—and his undertaking is this, to reconcile something which he thinks will be, or will appear like justice to the people, with the non-disturbance of the existing supremacy of his order. Now, it is no use attempting great political changes without disturbance; the object is to disturb something. The Reform Bill which his father brought in, and which will make him renowned through all English history, disturbed the borough-mongers to a remarkable degree. And the Bill which repealed the Corn-law which Lord Grey so honourably approved, disturbed landlords and farmers, and did them nearly as much good as it did the people. Therefore, I do not care a bit about political change. I have no hostility to it because it makes some disturbance; that is precisely what we want.

What then do you think Lord Grey has proposed? I wish you to observe it minutely, to see what it is that one of the most acute minds in the country can propose in opposition to the plain and simple proposition to which my hon. Friend has given his warm approval to-day, and so often before. Lord Grey—I am quoting, not from his book, but from a friendly criticism in the *Spectator*, which newspaper proposes that votes should be given after the cumulative fashion. Now I must explain that—[Uproar in the hall]—and if the gentleman there, who is rather pressed in the crowd, will only listen, he will hear the most amusing proposition he has ever heard in his life. Lord Grey, as I understand, proposes that when there are two candidates to be elected, or three, or any number—(I will take two for the sake of the simplest illustration)—that any man coming to vote, instead of giving one vote for Mr. Scholefield and another to me, might give both to

Mr. Scholefield or both to me. Now, let us see how it would work. Take your last election: there were three candidates, and two Members to be elected. I will assume, for the sake of illustration, that this borough had a number of electors equal to 10,000, and that 6,500 were Liberal, and would support us, and 3,500 would have been disposed to support Mr. Acland, when he was a candidate, though that, as you know, is a very wild supposition. Look how it would work. The 3,500, we will suppose, kept well together, and instead of giving 3,500 votes, which we now call plumpers, each man would give him (Mr. Acland) two, which would make 7,000; so Mr. Acland would stand on the poll with 7,000 votes. If the remaining 6,500 who were Liberal kept together, and had an equal regard for Mr. Scholefield and myself and voted steadily for him and for me, we should have 6,500 each, and if one more voted for Mr. Scholefield than for me, of course Mr. Scholefield would be at the head of the poll as regards myself, and Mr. Acland would be at the head of the poll as regards both; and thus the gentleman who came into your town upon principles which are repudiated by two-thirds or the vast majority of the electors would, under this ingenious scheme, be returned by our worthy Mayor the next day at the head of the poll. That is what they call, I suppose, not disturbing anything. We have heard of races—I have heard of donkey-races, where the last wins. So in this case, the slowest animal would run off with the prize.

That is not all, because Lord Grey has several other propositions. One is that Members should be given to Universities. I happen to know that the Universities which are now represented could not at any time during the last sixty years—during which Lord Grey and his father (one or the other) have been statesmen—have been induced to return either of them to Parliament. Lord Grey proposes, further, that professions, such as lawyers and doctors, should have representatives in Parliament; not from them as citizens, as we have now, but from them as lawyers and doctors. I have had the misfortune of late years to fall very unfortunately into the hands of the lawyers, and hardly anything, I assure you, can be more painful or more costly. Then, occasionally, we all of us have to fall into the hands of the doctor; and, though we feel grateful to him, we would much rather see him in our houses as a friend than in his professional character. If I wanted law I should go to the lawyer, and if I wanted medicine or surgery I should go to the physician or the surgeon; but I should not like the public and political interests of the people of this country to go into the hands of a class of men because they were lawyers or because they were doctors. In fact, there is nothing like this that I recollect, except the proposition of old Mr. Weller, who, when his son was engaged in some legal business, recommended him to consult a friend of his because he was a very good judge of a horse.

But I have not done with Lord Grey's proposition. He proposes that the House of Commons itself should have the authority on certain occasions to nominate as Members of its own body certain prominent men from amongst its number. For example, if a Member of the House, a prominent man, from some cause or other had failed of his election, that the House of Commons should have the right to give him the nomination of a perpetual seat in that House, in order that the House might be sure to have a Member whom some great constituency had rejected. But now to you men—to the working-men of Birmingham—he offers another proposition, which is that there should be a register of trades, and that a certain number of Members should be elected by certain trades, enough to allow them to speak in the House of Commons; but rely upon it, not enough seriously to affect the decision of that House. I have always thought that it was one of the great objects of statesmen in our

time not to separate the people into sections and classes, but rather to unite them all in one firm and compact body of citizenship, equally treated by the law, and equally loyal to the law and to the Government of the country.

But Lord Grey proposes some things that are right. He would extend the suffrage, and he would abolish many, if not all, the very small boroughs. But having made these concessions, he adds to them the propositions which I have described, and which more than neutralise the gifts which he would confer upon you; and I beg you to take the warning which my hon. Friend has given you, and which I will venture to repeat —to look with the greatest possible suspicion upon any of these fancy propositions of Reform. *The question is a great question, and a simple question*, and if any man comes before you with a complex and involved scheme which is difficult to understand, take note of this, that he does not offer you solid coin in payment of your claim, with the impress of the English Constitution upon it, but he offers you flash notes or coin of an inferior or worthless metal.

I am often charged, as you know, with having too little reverence for authority in this country. Some have even dared in public newspapers to charge me with disloyalty to the head of the executive in this country. There is one disloyalty which I hold to be worse than all other—worse than that which turns its back upon the Crown, or turns its back upon the peerage,—and that is *disloyalty to freedom and to the people*. If representation be not an evil—and who in this country shall say it is?—what is the use of all these tricks not to complete representation, but to avoid it and escape it? I want to ask what is this representation that we consider the foundation of liberty in this kingdom? If all the men in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland—6,000,000 or 7,000,000—were assembled on Salisbury Plain to determine on great public questions, the crowd would be too great for business, and chaos would come. It is therefore resolved, and has been resolved for six hundred years, that counties and boroughs and districts, and the people in their different localities, shall send up men in whom they have confidence, to meet at a certain time and place, and having the fear and the regard which I trust we all have for those who send us there, to act honourably in the face of God and of our conscience, and honourably in the face of our country, on behalf of the true and solid interests of the nation. But if you did decide on Salisbury Plain with that vast multitude, clearly the majority must carry the day; and if you split the nation up into constituencies, clearly if you are to have any representation at *all, the majority must carry the day*.

There is a great fear of majorities amongst these people. The people of Torquay did not go into much detail, and therefore they did not say much on that point, but they have a great fear of what they call 'numbers,' and of election and legislation by majorities. What is a majority in Birmingham? It holds one opinion, and we are supposed to represent it; but the majority in Liverpool—a town bigger than Birmingham —in the present state of the constituencies, holds a different opinion, and it sends one man who agrees with us, and another man who always contradicts him. The minority in Birmingham is in a certain sense represented by the majority of Liverpool, and taking the majorities in some districts, and the minorities in others, if there be an *opinion that is worth anything which* is held by any constituency, as a matter of course it has its representative, who can speak on its behalf in that House; but surely nobody in his senses would ask that in a representative country the minorities in all the constituencies should send Members to Parliament, and that their business when they got there should be always to say 'No' when the majority said 'Ay.'

I want to know whence this fear of the people is. Will somebody under-

Mr. Cobden was in America at the time,—I suppose they did not like him much better than they liked me, but it is possible they disliked him rather less. Mr. Cobden did not take the seat which was offered him for reasons which were then made public, but the statement which was made to me—which came from Lord Palmerston to be conveyed to me—was this, that I had expressed opinions in recent speeches with regard to institutions, or an institution, which the majority of Englishmen deemed essential, which would make it impossible for him to offer me a seat in his Government.

I had attended meetings—you must recollect—in fact, the first I attended here after I was elected one of your representatives. I afterwards went to Glasgow, and to Edinburgh, and to Manchester, and to Bradford, and the largest room in all these places could not contain one-half of those who wished to come to hear something said on the question which I was discussing, and the speeches which were then made were supposed to be tainted with rather less reverence for the House of Lords than some persons think proper; and therefore, though I was fit to be your representative, and was applauded by listening thousands of my countrymen, I was not qualified to take office in her Majesty's Government.

But is it true that the people are against the Church? Do they ever, in the slightest degree, abstain from giving respect and honour to any minister of that Church who acts even though it be with the feebleness which belongs to all efforts in that character—who acts in any degree consistent with the position of a Christian minister? Besides, if the Church is the poor man's Church, surely the poor man must know it; and, therefore, who could imagine for a moment that the people of this country, acting fairly through their representatives, would do anything as regards that Church which would damage its usefulness as a Christian institution, or make it less honoured or less influential in the spread of Christianity amongst the population of these islands? Why are they, then, afraid of the people? If a million more electors—I believe the last Bill only proposed to add half a million—were admitted, is there any single interest that deserves one moment's consideration that this million of new electors, joined with the present million of electors, would combine in Parliament to uproot and destroy? I am not one called upon to defend our institutions. It is not my business, because they are not attacked; but I will assert this, that the Crown—which is the most venerable of the institutions to which it is supposed democracy could be hostile—that the Crown is not opposed to the admission of this million or half million, and that the Queen of these realms has more than once from her own lips declared to Parliament her free consent to the admission of this number of people to the franchise.

It follows, then, I say, that the institutions which people are so much afraid of are in themselves unpopular or hurtful, or else that the people themselves are grossly slandered. I would insist on this; since the power of the Crown was limited two hundred years ago, and since the power of the nobles was limited thirty years ago, good government has gained greatly in this country, and the people are in all circumstances better, and I am quite sure that the respect shown to the Crown is more general by far than it was at an earlier period. But our Constitution involves necessarily the representation of the people, and in calling for this representation we stand upon a foundation from which no argument and no sophistry can ever remove us. The House of Commons is in reality the only guarantee we have for freedom. If you looked at any other country, and saw nothing but a monarch, he might be a good king and might do his best, but you would see that there is no guarantee for freedom—you know not who will be his successor. If you saw a country

vith no Crown, but with a handful of iobles, administering the government of the country, you would say there is no guarantee there for freedom, because a number of individuals acting together have not the responsibility, or the feeling of responsibility, that one man has, and they do things which one man would not dare to do. If there be a man here who feels himself and his prejudices rise up against the statements I am making, he, at least, will admit that the real and only permanent foundation for political freedom in any country is in the establishment and maintenance of a system of political representation—in your Houses of Parliament.

At that dinner at Torquay, a nobleman presided whom I had the pleasure of knowing a little when he was a Member of the House of Commons, and another nobleman whom I have also known there made the principal speech, and what do you think they did? They had a number of toasts—which is a thing I do not recommend, because they do not drink them in cold water—and they proposed, first, what are called the ceremonial toasts—though one would hope they are not altogether ceremonial—and amongst them the House of Lords. The toast was responded to in a long speech by Lord Devon. And what did they propose next? Not the House of Commons, but 'The Conservative Party in the House of Commons.' They did not propose 'The Conservative Party in the House of Lords.' Perhaps they thought the whole House of Lords was a Conservative party, or else they thought that the Liberal party in the House of Commons was really not worth remembering, except it may be to wish that it did not exist. These gentlemen do not comprehend our Constitution at all. They do not know, apparently, that it is only because there is something which the people still believe to be in some degree a representative body, and which stands between them and monarchical and aristocratic despotism—that it is only the existence of that House which makes the institution they are so fond of safe and permanent at all—and they are afraid that the five millions somehow or other will get into it. Now, I beg to tell them that the five millions will get into it, though they may not get into it all at once; and perhaps few men desire that they should, for I am opposed myself to great and violent changes, which create needless shocks, and which are accepted, if they are accepted, with great alarm.

But I will undertake to say that some portion, a considerable and effective portion, of those five millions will before many years are passed be freely allowed to vote for Members of the House of Commons. It is not the democracy which these gentlemen are always afraid of that is the peril of this country. It was not democracy in 1832 that was the peril. It was the desperate antagonism of the class that then had power to the just claims and rights of the people. And at this moment, when they dine and when I speak, I tell them that Conservatism—they give it that name, but it is worthy of a very different name—that Conservatism, be it Tory or be it Whig, is the true national peril which we have to face. They may dam the stream, they may keep back the waters, but the volume is ever increasing, and it descends with accelerated force, and the time will come when, in all probability, and to a certainty, if wisdom does not take the place of folly, the waters will burst their banks, and these men, who fancy they are stemming this imaginary apparition of democracy, will be swept away by the resolute will of a united and determined people.

For one moment cast your eyes over the face of Europe. You will find that there are now only two considerable States that have not representative institutions—Turkey and Russia; and Russia is making progress in freedom equal at least to the progress of any other State in Europe. Representation is found in Italy, in Austria even, in

almost all the German States, in the Northern States, in Belgium, Holland, France, Portugal, and Spain. It is found also, as I have said, and as you know, all over the American continent. It is found, also, firmly settled as an institution in Australia. Englishmen, everywhere but at home, are received into the bosom of this great permanent undying institution, this safeguard for national, for human freedom. But here they are slandered, they are insulted, they are reviled, they are shut out. They are invited to half a hundred ways of amusing themselves; but if they stand at the hustings or at the poll, and see their richer brethren come up to vote, they are not allowed to register their names in favour of principles for which their fathers before them, and themselves, have sighed in many a bitter hour of disappointment.

Now, Sir, I would change all this. I speak out of no hostility to any class, or any institution. That man who proposes to exclude permanently five millions of his countrymen from the right which the Constitution of his country makes sacred in his eyes, I say that is the man that separates Englishmen into two nations, and makes it impossible that we should be wholly or permanently a contented people. I demand, then, this, which is but the right of our Constitution, that the House of Commons shall be made freely and fairly to represent the Commons and the people of the United Kingdom. England has long been famous for the enjoyment of personal freedom by her people. They are free to think, they are free to speak, they are free to write; and England has been famed of late years, and is famed now the world over, for the freedom of her industry and the greatness and the freedom of her commerce. I want to know then why it is that her people should not be free to vote. Who is there that will meet me on this platform, or will stand upon any platform, and will dare to say, in the hearing of an open meeting of his countrymen, that these millions for whom I am now pleading are too degraded, too vicious, and too destructive to be entrusted with the elective franchise? I at least will never thus slander my countrymen. I claim for them the right of admission, through their representatives, into the most ancient and the most venerable Parliament which at this hour exists among men; and when they are thus admitted, and not till then, it may be truly said that England, the august mother of free nations, herself is free.

REFORM.

VI.

THE REFORM BILL OF LORD RUSSELL'S ADMINISTRATION.

ON THE MOTION FOR LEAVE TO BRING IN THE BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 13, 1866.

[On the death of Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell became Prime Minister, and on the meeting of Parliament, a Bill for the improvement of the Representation of the People was introduced by Mr. Gladstone, on behalf of the Government. The Bill did not pass, and the Russell Administration retired from office in June, 1866.]

ALTHOUGH in the course of this debate I have been the subject of much remark, and of not a little that may be fairly termed unusual attack, I beg to assure the House that I have not risen for the purpose of defending myself, since I am ready to leave my course in this House and my political character to the impartial view of Members of the House, and to the just judgment of my countrymen outside the House. Nor have I risen for the purpose of entering into an elaborate defence of the Bill introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think, however, that there has been so much said which is not to the point, that it may be advantageous if I endeavour to explain to the House what I understand the Bill to be—to state some of the grounds on which it appeals to us for support, and to ask the House whether, under the circumstances of this question, and in the existing condition of the country, it is the duty of Parliament to permit it to pass into a law.

One thing in the Bill is highly satisfactory to me—that both in what it does and the manner in which it proposes to do it, it is distinct, clear, without any tricks—without semblance of giving something in one clause, and then under a feeling of alarm withdrawing that something in the clause that follows. I have always been in favour of meeting this question and dealing with it in such a manner that every person in the country who is now an elector, or who is to be included in the Bill, should comprehend that it was a measure, so far as it went, fair and generous to the people whom it was intended to enfranchise.

I think I can show reasons—if we

can for a moment get rid of the notion of party combination—why this House should readily, and without hesitation, agree to this Bill. One portion of it will recommend itself, I am quite certain, to all Gentlemen who are enthusiastic admirers of the Bill of 1832 and on this point I can confidently ask for the support of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne—that is the portion of the Bill which is intended to remove all legal obstacles or difficulties by which many persons who were intended to be enfranchised by the Reform Bill have been up to this time deprived of their votes. The Reform Bill proposed to give a vote to every occupier of a 10*l.* house in a borough. It is shown, partly it may be by the wording of the Act, partly by the decisions of judges and courts, that this extension of the franchise was never complete; that by the operation of clauses which made it necessary to pay rates, and which made it necessary almost in effect that the occupier himself should pay the rates, many thousands—I know not the number—will have been disfranchised from 1832 up to the very hour at which this Bill shall pass into law. In Scotland there is no such disqualification as that which this Bill proposes to remove, for there they have no rate paying clauses, and they have no system of compounding which would juggle men out of their franchise; and the object of this Bill is to assimilate our law in this respect to the law of Scotland, and to give to the Reform Act of 1832 the same efficacy which the people expected from it when it passed both Houses of Parliament. I suppose, although Gentlemen may not admit it by any outward expression of opinion, they are not against such an improvement of the Reform Act as will give the vote which this part of the Bill is intended to give. The right hon. Member for Calne can certainly not refuse his assent, because if there be one thing except the classical times of antiquity to which he is more devoted than another, it is clearly the Bill of 1832.

The next point to which I shall ask the attention of the House is that which the Bill proposes to do in respect to the county franchise. Here I must say, at the risk of saying what is not complimentary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his colleagues, that I think the Government have shown a remarkable feebleness, which lays them open to great blame, not only on the part of the House, but of almost every person in the country who has expected a Bill on the subject of Reform. They propose to bring the franchise down from a 50*l.* occupation to one of 14*l.* The occupation franchise in counties was a measure of your own carrying in 1832. I do not say that to touch it would not have been necessary now, if you had not then disturbed the ancient franchise of the counties; but when the county occupation franchise was fixed at 50*l.* and the franchise in boroughs at 10*l.*, he must have been a very dull man indeed who could not have foreseen that the county franchise must at some time not remote be greatly reduced. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke encouragingly in that Reform discussion many years ago, when the House carried the third reading of the Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for East Surrey; but from that time to this there has been a good deal more done on this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire, and his Cabinet—the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn being very intimately concerned with the then leader of the House in manufacturing a Reform Bill—had not had much experience, and it was not to be wondered at that they made mistakes. They brought in their Bill—a Bill containing some good things and some bad things—and among other things proposed a 10*l.* franchise in counties. They took, however, a considerable compensation by attempting to withdraw all freeholders within the limits of boroughs from the county franchise—transferring them to the electoral body within the limits of

boroughs. But that does not in the slightest degree change this fact—that they did with due deliberation come to the opinion that 10*l.* occupiers in counties were fit and proper persons to exercise the elective franchise. You do not suppose that they proposed to put persons on the county lists of whose fitness they were not well assured, and then endeavoured to compensate for this by their proposal with regard to the freeholders in the boroughs. They believed, and believe now, no doubt, that 10*l.* was a proper and fitting franchise for the counties in England and Wales; and I should be glad to find them, when the House shall be in Committee on this Bill, proposing to reduce the sum of a 14*l.* franchise to a 10*l.* one. If they wish to have an easy victory over the Government, and to prove themselves consistent, and to extend the range of the county registration, I and a good many Members in this part of the House will be extremely happy to give them our cordial support; and I can promise them the support of the right hon. Gentleman behind me (Mr. Lowe), because he has fixed his affections on a 10*l.* rental franchise. If he were to say he approved a 10*l.* household franchise in boroughs he must do so also in the counties, because we all know that the 10*l.* householders in counties are generally men in better pecuniary circumstances than those of equal rental in boroughs.

So far as I have gone, I hope I have persuaded Gentlemen opposite, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne, from any opposition to the Bill of the Government with regard to these two portions of it. I may say further, with respect to this proposition of the Government, that there was one illustration the learned Gentleman (Mr. Whiteside) might have made in his amusing speech, for however much the country is going to ruin, he can always be amusing in this House—there is one illustration he might have given us. He said that in Ireland they had a 12*l.* rating franchise for the counties, and that is as near as may be in value to a 14*l.* rental franchise. Therefore, the proposition of the Government—although I disapprove it—still has the sanction of the course which has been taken in Ireland, and this, I have heard from Irish Members, is considered a not unsatisfactory condition of the county franchise. But, with the experience of a great number of years of this franchise in Ireland, I think the Member for Calne may screw up his courage to support this proposition of the Bill.

I now come to the only point on which there is any great difference of opinion. I think the world has never shown an instance of a legislative assembly such as this making a great disturbance among themselves, exciting themselves, getting into a violent passion, pouring out cataracts of declamation like those we heard last night, and all upon the simple question whether the franchise in boroughs shall remain as now at 10*l.* or shall be fixed for a time at 7*l.* Hon. Gentlemen opposite appear to be surprised at the frankness with which I speak. The head of the present Government was laughed at for years because he spoke of finality in connection with the Bill of 1832. I should be very happy if it should so happen, as the right hon. Gentleman has suggested in his fervid imagination, that the working classes would in great numbers surmount the barrier of 7*l.*, and that ultimately it should be even equal to a household suffrage in the country. But does any Gentleman opposite believe that he is carrying a Bill did any Gentleman sitting in this House ever vote upon any measure of arrangement and organisation like this, and confidently assure himself that the measure should be final? He must have a very poor notion of what our children will be if he thinks them less competent to decide such questions for themselves than we are at present to decide them. Therefore do not think that because I use the phrase 'for a time,' I am not of opinion that this Bill,

if it be carried, will in all probability put an end to Bills having reference to the suffrage—for such portion of time, at least, as this Bill will be found to meet the views of the intelligent—[loud laughter and cheers]—allow me to finish the sentence—of the intelligent population of this country.

The Bill of the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes, in addition to the 7*l.* franchise, what he calls a lodger franchise. The Member for Buckinghamshire in his Bill proposed something of the same kind, but with a 20*l.* qualification, while the present Bill proposes a 10*l.* qualification — 10*l.* being very nearly the same for a holding of this kind as 7*l.* would be for a house. But the right hon. Gentleman opposite proposed provisions in his measure which would be extremely difficult, and I think would lead to great perplexity. I have no doubt that the proposition now made by the Government is simpler than his, and likely to be carried out with less difficulty and more satisfaction to that class of persons in this metropolis who are chiefly interested in this part of the Bill. With regard to the 7*l.* franchise, let us examine it for one moment. Somebody has said, and many persons have written, that this Bill is my Bill — that the Government made this Bill at my recommendation. ['Hear.'] I thought somebody would say this. I have not been able to find a point of the Bill which I have recommended. I never was in favour of a 6*l.* franchise, and I should never have proposed it. I believe in a household franchise for the boroughs of this country. But when I found a powerful Government like the last—and it was not as honest as it was powerful — proposing a 6*l.* franchise, with the expectation that it would carry it, I was not to stand in the way of a considerable enfranchisement of the people merely because I had an idea that household suffrage would be better. A 7*l.* franchise is a proposition I have never said one syllable in favour of, and it never entered into my mind that the Government would split hairs in this fashion, and would leave the 6*l.* franchise, their own former proposition, and which nearly everybody in the country who has asked for a Reform Bill has expressed himself ready to accept, and would offer the House a 7*l.* franchise. But here it is offered, and unfortunately, beggars in the House of Commons, like beggars outside of it, cannot be choosers, and we are sometimes in a position to take only what is given.

When the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman opposite was brought in, a very remarkable thing happened. Two eminent Members of the Government seceded from it, and took their seats on the third bench behind, and I think I see one of them sitting there at this moment. They both made what we call a personal explanation to the House, and the explanation was that they differed from their colleagues on this question of the suffrage. They did not approve that the suffrage in counties should be brought down to the rate of the boroughs, and that the suffrage in the boroughs should be continued at the same rate which was fixed at the time of the Reform Act. I am not sure whether these right hon. Gentlemen coincide in the opinion that the county franchise should be brought down to 10*l.* I think the right hon. Gentlemen expressed some dissent—at least they were of opinion that the franchise in the boroughs ought to be reduced; and I know the Member for Oxfordshire, in the words which have often been quoted since, expressed himself in favour of establishing a borough franchise at 8*l.* Now when the Government have been splitting hairs with regard to 6*l.* and 7*l.*, I hope the right hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House will not split hairs between 8*l.* and 7*l.*, because surely after the discussion this question has undergone—after the mode and manner the House has been brought into difficulty by past transactions—after the great expectations which have been raised throughout the country, I think it would show very ill statesmanship on the part of

those right hon. Gentlemen and a mere obedience to the cause of party—it would hardly be becoming in them—if they were not willing to make the small concession of 1*l.* in answer to the concession of 1*l.* which I am willing or forced to make, and join with me in giving at least a friendly if not an enthusiastic support to the Bill of the Government.

And, after all, this 3*l.*, what is it? The right hon. Gentleman behind me has conjured up a frightful apparition. The 10*l.* is the salvation of the country. For thirty-four years its operation has been such as to extort from him unlimited approval. I do not know whether he will think 9*l.* perilous or 8*l.* in any degree of doubtful utility, but 7*l.* he considers to be actually destructive to the interests of the country; and he has shown moreover that it would destroy the connection between the Executive Government and the House—that it would add greatly to all the evils which are supposed to exist in connection with the present Bill, without any of its advantages; in fact, I know not whether a more gloomy, discouraging, and appalling picture of the future of the House and the country was ever drawn by any Member of the House. And all the foundation of these horrors is that it is proposed to reduce the franchise in the boroughs by 1*l.* lower than was recommended by the Member for Oxfordshire and by his colleague the Member for the University of Cambridge. Now, I appeal to Gentlemen opposite whether they will allow themselves, considering the position of this question, to make it impossible that the question of the suffrage should be got out of our way during this present session of Parliament. If they do make it impossible—I am not much given to prophesy, but I venture to predict that there are many on those benches now who will live to regret the course they are about to take.

There is one other proposition—it is made in this Bill—which I hope the House will not listen to for a moment, and that is the Savings-bank franchise. I think the Member for Buckinghamshire had something like it—perhaps the very same thing—in his Bill. I disapproved of it then. I have no objection to enfranchise those who may be enfranchised by it; but I think it is the very worst of all the fancy franchises ever proposed. It will be unequal to the last degree, and it will be, I believe, the source of every kind of fraud. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wick, who, I think, in speaking of it said he did not see why the investment of 50*l.*—the saving of it in a Savings-bank—should give a man a higher social and political position than the investment or saving of an equal sum in any other description of property where the investment could be fairly ascertained. I object altogether to giving the franchise to one man and shutting it out from another—that second man, it may be, being far more heroic than the other. For example, a man may have to provide a humble equipment for a daughter's marriage, a small sum for a son's apprenticeship—something may be taken out of his earnings for the education of his children, he may have under his roof an aged parent, and he may be performing to that parent the most sacred and most holy of duties, and these may cause him to withdraw 5*l.* or 10*l.* from his little fund in the Savings-bank, or may prevent his having any fund there at all, and the law steps in, and for doing so much, which in every rank of life is so honourable and so exemplary, his name is to be erased from the electoral list of the town in which he lives. I protest against this Savings-bank franchise. I think also it would be liable to great fraud, because three or four members of a family may invest in a Savings-bank in one name and so give to that one person a vote. I do not in the least object to any one person having a vote, but I do object to giving it under a system which, altogether apart from the general processes of our enfranchisement, is liable to the utmost in-

equality, and to a species of fraud which cannot be prevented.

Now I have gone through the Bill in its main provisions, and I would ask the House what they think of it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us—in fact, we well know—that we have in England and Wales about five and a half millions of men. Under this Bill he further tells us we should have 900,000 electors. [A Voice from the Treasury Benches: '1,300,000.'] But not 1,300,000 when the double qualifications are taken off. Whatever that be, it will place within the franchise perhaps a little more than one in five, leaving out four millions of grown men in England and Wales who will still not have the franchise. Of those he says there will be 330,000 working-men. This is a very—as I am quite confident whenever the matter is fairly looked into will be found out—exaggerated estimate. The right hon. Gentleman included 60,000 who now live in 10*l*. houses besides those referred to in the Blue Books. And more than that, he included every man between 10*l*. and 7*l*., although the experience of every one tells us that is not correct; and as to all these working-men brought forward in these Blue Books, except the Members for Coventry, I will undertake to say that there is scarcely a single Member of the House, looking to his own canvass and his own constituency, who is not prepared to say that the estimate is a delusion and a snare.

I should only be too glad if it could be honestly ascertained that so many working-men would be placed upon the register; at least I think it would do something towards confirming hon. Gentlemen in the view they entertain that the conduct of so many of those men as possess the franchise has hitherto been most exemplary in their exercise of it. Now, I appeal to hon. Gentlemen—I am very earnest in my wishes upon this question, because, notwithstanding the unkind allusion and imputation thrown upon me some time ago by a right hon. Gentleman on this side of the House, there is nobody who has a greater interest than I have, in a certain sense, in a fair and early settlement of this question. I have had as much to do with it as any one, I think, in discussing it publicly out of the House and in the House. I have discussed it frankly, and whatever hon. Gentlemen may think to the contrary, I never spoke on any question in which I took a greater interest, or with a deeper conviction that I was serving the true interests of their class as well as those of my countrymen at large.

I do not know whether I can appeal to certain Members of the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne has shown that nearly everything the Bill proposes is really that which is bound up in some shape with the Bill of 1832, or with the propositions in which he has been concerned. I have got here—it is really curious how things drop into your hands when you want them—here is a paper, the *Norfolk News*, of the year 1859, and I have certain extracts which I have taken from the paper. These are extracts from election addresses. The first is from the election address of Lord Palmerston, who said there must be a Bill to alter the law regulating the representation of the people in Parliament. Then Lord John Russell said we should have to consider the great question of the amendment of the representation of the people in Parliament. Sir George Grey said that at the earliest period consistent with duty, the Government would be prepared to deal with the question of Parliamentary Reform. Then there were similar extracts from the speeches of my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, from the speeches of the Attorney-General of that day, and of the Solicitor-General. There is then an extract headed, 'Right Hon. Robert Lowe, Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education.' And what does he say in 1859, before the Government of the right hon. Gentleman opposite was discharged from the service of the House and of

the country? The Right Hon. Robert Lowe says:—

'It will be the duty of the Government to prepare a measure of Reform, and I have every confidence that it will be one which if not fully satisfying men of extreme opinions, will be acceptable to the great body of the people.'

I think the right hon. Gentleman has a very short memory, or else he trifles with this House. Is it conceivable that a man who wrote that in his election address in 1859 should stand up tonight and deliver such a speech as we have heard from him for an hour and a half? I am afraid, Sir, that when under these circumstances men change their opinions after they are fifty years of age, there is not much expectation of turning them back again. I feel that I could not with much hope appeal to the right hon. Member for Calne, or to his colleague the right hon. Member for Stroud; I do not know that I should appeal to the noble Lord the Member for Haddington (Lord Elcho), who, with the exception of the hon. Member for Salisbury, is the only Member at this side of the House who cheers the sentiments of either of the right hon. Gentlemen.

What is the reason, I ask, that Gentlemen who have been holders of office take this course with regard to the Bill of the Government? I will not deal in any insinuations, but I will say that, from Gentlemen who have held office, but who happen to have been left out of what may be called the daily ministrations, we have a right to expect a very minute account of the reasons why they change their opinions before we can turn round and change with them. These are the Gentlemen who all at once start up as the great teachers of statesmanship to the House and the country. Are they what the right hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich spoke of in the recess—are they the foremost statesmen in the country? and if so, is there to be a bid for them to take the place of Gentlemen who have not much succeeded as statesmen when in office? In office these right hon. Gentlemen are as docile as any other Gentlemen in office, but I fear, notwithstanding the ideas some people have of my influence with Earl Russell, that I am not able to offer them any arguments on his part that will tell upon them. I do not object for a moment to a Member of this House being fond of office. The Chancellor of the Exchequer probably lives much more happily in office than he would live if he were out of it, though I do not think he will live quite so long. I do not complain of men who are fond of office, though I could never comprehend the reason they like it so much. If I may parody, or if I may make an alteration in a line or two of one of the most beautiful poems in our language, I might ask—

'For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
That pleasing, anxious office e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the Treasury,
Nor cast one last, long, lingering look behind.'

What I complain of is this, that when place recedes into the somewhat dim past, that which in office was deemed patriotism vanishes with it; and we have one howl of despair from these right hon. Gentlemen because it is proposed to diminish the franchise in boroughs from 10*l.* to 7*l.*, and to add by so small a proposition as that something to the freedom of the people of this country.

The right hon. Gentleman below me (Mr. Horsman) said a little against the Government and a little against the Bill, but had last night a field night for an attack upon so humble an individual as I am. The right hon. Gentleman is the first of the new party who has expressed his great grief, who has retired into what may be called his political cave of Adullam, and he has called about him every one that was in distress and every one that was discontented. The right hon. Gentleman has been

anxious to form a party in this House. There is scarcely any one on this side of the House who is able to address the House with effect or to take much part in our debates, whom he has not tried to bring over to his party or cabal; and at last the right hon. Gentleman has succeeded in hooking the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne. I know there was an opinion expressed many years ago by a Member of the Treasury bench and of the Cabinet, that two men would make a party. When a party is formed of two men so amiable —so discreet—as the two right hon. Gentlemen, we may hope to see for the first time in Parliament a party perfectly harmonious and distinguished by mutual and unbroken trust. But there is one difficulty which it is impossible to remove. This party of two reminds me of the Scotch terrier, which was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail of it.

The right hon. Member for Calne told us that he had some peculiar election experiences. There are men who make discord wherever they appear. The right hon. Gentleman on going down to Kidderminster got into some unpleasing altercation with somebody, and it ended with his having his head broken. But I am happy to say, and the House will bear witness, that with regard to its power, that head is probably as strong now as before he took his leave of Kidderminster and went to Calne—a village in the West of England. The right hon. Gentleman found on the list of electors at Calne, one hundred and seventy-four names, of whom, according to the Blue Book, about seven were working-men. I suppose three or four of them were probably keepers of shops, and some of those whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer I think ui-nproperly included in his list. When men—1-ht hon. Member went down there upon this quesvilt even more aggravated standing the unkininster. They did not tation thrown upon mbey did something by a right hon. Gentlema.law was much worse, for they shut up the police in the Town Hall, and the little mob of this little place had the whole game to themselves. The right hon. Gentleman told us of the polypus, which takes its colour from the rock on which it lives, and he said that some hon. Members take their colours from their constituencies. The constituency which the right hon. Gentleman represents consists of one hundred and seventy-four men, seven of whom are working-men; but the real constituent of the right hon. Gentleman is a Member of the other House of Parliament, and he could send in his butler or his groom, instead of the right hon. Gentleman, to represent the borough. I think in one sense—regarding the right hon. Gentleman as an intellectual gladiator in this House —we are much indebted to the Marquis of Lansdowne that he did not do that.

And now, Sir, I said that I wanted to explain the particulars of this Bill, and to appeal to the good sense and patriotism of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I ask them not to take that disparaging view of their countrymen which has been presented to them by the right hon. Member for Calne and the hon. Member for Salisbury, who—I presume from their residence at the antipodes—seem to take a Botany Bay impression, and a Botany Bay view, of the character of the great bulk of their countrymen. The right hon. Gentleman some nights ago, when I was not here, said that I, even in the matter of the cattle plague, set class against class. ['Hear, hear!' from the Opposition benches, and laughter.] The hon. Gentlemen opposite, who from the ease with which they are amused must be a most amiable party, laugh at this observation. I ask any man in this House, is it possible to do a thing more perilous than that which is done by the right hon. Gentleman and his Australian colleague the hon. Member for Salisbury—namely, to make it appear that there is a gulf that shall not be passed by legislation between the highest and most powerful and a portion of the

middle classes, and the great body of the working-people who are really the heart of this great nation?

The right hon. Gentleman tells us that by-and-by, if everybody will wait long enough, everybody will get over this barrier and be inside the franchise. But that is no great consolation, because he said that by the Bill of the Government we, or our children, shall be eaten up at some future time. Would it not be infinitely better to show our trust in the people now? Of all the follies and crimes which Governments commit, that of a constant distrust of their subjects, of their citizens, of their country, is about the wildest and most foolish. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud and somebody else who followed him tell us that the people are very indifferent about this matter. I think I just caught the Member for Salisbury in the hubbub of the House as he rose to speak, making an observation about the number of petitions; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne said he thought their number was not more than four. But how many petitions were there previous to 1831? Bear in mind that Lord John Russell had for some time discontinued bringing forward his motion for Parliamentary Reform. In 1821 one petition was presented to the House in favour of Parliamentary Reform. In 1822 there were twelve, in 1823 there were twenty-nine; in the six years that passed between 1824 and 1829 there was not a single petition presented to this House in favour of Parliamentary Reform; and in 1830 there were, fourteen petitions—ten more than those with which the right hon. Gentleman made himself merry to-night. And what took place in 1831-2? This,—some of you were fleeing for your lives in the midst of a storm which you had not foreseen, but which was as inevitable as any storm that arises in the heavens. It was an accident that brought it about—the French Revolution. Well, there are always accidents. A great portion of the things that happen in our lives, so far as we can judge, have the appearance of accidents. But with the accident there was material for a conflagration, and a conflagration arose.

I recollect that the late Francis Place and two or three others went to the Duke of Wellington as a deputation when he took office after the fall of Lord Grey's Government, and that they remonstrated with the Duke. He was not a man that liked remonstrances very much, but they told him what was going on, how dissatisfied the people were, and how perilous they thought the course of the Government in opposing Reform. And what did the Duke say? He was standing warming himself at the fire. He said to these gentlemen, 'You have got heads on your shoulders, and I would advise you to keep them there.' Two or three days afterwards the Duke of Wellington was driven from office. The popular feeling in the country and in the metropolis was such that this great soldier that knew no fear was obliged to resign, and Lord Grey was permitted to come back, and the Reform Bill was eventually carried.

Now I ask hon. Gentlemen if they think any accident will ever happen again. That accident was in Paris. But in 1848, only eighteen years afterwards, there was another accident in Paris, which was followed by a succession of accidents in other parts of Europe. I recollect at the time a noble Lord who was then a Member of this House was greatly alarmed. He came to me from that side of the House, and assured me that he had always been in favour of a great extension of the suffrage. I believe that he was not quite sure that I should not soon be a member of a Provisional Government. I ask hon. Gentlemen whether it is not better to accept a measure so moderate, and if you like, as may be said by many in the country, so inadequate, but still to some extent so good? Is it not better to accept this measure, and show your confidence in the people, than to take the advice

of the Member for Calne—the most revolutionary advice that was ever given in this House—and shut your doors against five millions of people, and tell them that unless they can scramble over this 10*l.* barrier none of them shall ever find a direct representation in this House?

The Member for Stroud talked loudly last night about constitutional rights and constitutional principles. But who was it that made the present constitution of England more than any other men in our history? Surely the men of the first and second Parliaments in the reign of Charles the First. Is it not in the very journals of your House? The Clerk of the House could easily find and read to you the resolutions of the House, that wherever there is not some direct interdiction or contradiction of it, the ancient and common franchise of the people of this country in the towns is the householding franchise. And do you mean to tell me that Lord Somers, who was himself a great authority, and to a large extent one of the builders of our existing Constitution, was wrong when he said that though no man by birth had any right to office, yet that by birth he had a right to vote, and that the possession of a vote was the only true security which an Englishman had for the protection of his life and property? I am not stating that as my opinion. I am giving you the opinion of one of the greatest men in the Parliamentary annals of this nation, and therefore I say you will not act constitutionally or wisely if you put any obstacle in the path of a Bill that is so moderate as this, and that may give great satisfaction to vast multitudes of the people.

If this Bill be rejected you will show that you are against all Reform, you will show that you have no confidence whatever even in that portion of the population which lives in houses between 10*l.* and 7*l.* rental. And if you pass this Bill you will show that you are not cut off altogether from sympathy with multitudes of your fellow-countrymen. I say there is peril in the present state of things. You have a population divorced almost entirely from the land, and shut out from the possession of the franchise. My hon. Friend the Member for Brighton touched upon the question of emigration. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne spoke of the intelligence of the people in this way—of their combinations and associations. We all know that they are reading, debating, thinking, and combining, and they know that in all our colonies, and in the United States, the position of their class is very different. I believe that if you do not moderate your tone and your views with regard to the great bulk of the working classes, you will find your country gradually weakened by a constantly increasing emigration, or you will find some accident happening, when you will have something to do more than you are asked to do to-night, under the threat, and it may be under the infliction, of violence.

Now, Sir, I said at the beginning that I did not rise to defend this Bill. I rose for the purpose of explaining it. It is not a Bill which, if I had been consulted by its framers, I should have recommended. If I had been a Minister it is not a Bill which I should have consented to present to the House. I think it is not adequate to the occasion, and that its concessions are not sufficient. But I know the difficulties under which Ministries labour, and I know the disinclination of Parliament to do much in the direction of this question. I shall give it my support because, as far as it goes, it is a simple and honest measure, and because I believe, if it becomes law, it will give more solidity and duration to everything that is good in the Constitution, and to everything that is noble in the character of the people of these realms.

REFORM.

VII.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL.—DEBATE ON THE SECOND READING.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 23, 1866.

From Hansard.

BEFORE I address myself to the question which is before the House, there are two matters of a personal character which I wish to dispose of. The right hon. Member for Calne, on the first night of this debate, made a complaint to the House that, in a speech out of this House, I had imputed to him, or quoted as from him, words which he had not uttered. The right hon. Gentleman was quite right to make that complaint, if he thought it worth while to make it, because there is no doubt —and I am sorry it so happened—that some three or four words which he had not spoken in that connection were added to the passage which he had spoken. I regret the inaccuracy very much. I have the satisfaction, however, of knowing or believing that I did the right hon. Gentleman no substantial injustice.

The other point refers to the speech of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley). He retorted on me a charge of conspiracy with reference to two divisions which took place some years ago in this House, one on the China War, and the other on the Conspiracy Bill. In neither of these cases did the mover of the resolution obtain a seconder from the opposite side of the House. But with regard to the first case, that of the China War, I was not in Parliament during that session. I was in bad health, out of the country; and the first thing I knew of it was from reading an account of what had taken place in this House in a public news-room in the city of Rome. With regard to the other case, that of the Conspiracy Bill, Members who were then in the House will recollect that on the first division, on the first reading of the Bill, nearly 100 Members—I think that was the exact number, I am not sure—or 99, voted in the division against the introduction or first reading of the Bill, including Lord John Russell, the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gibson), myself, and many others. The noble Lord's friends warmly welcomed and supported that Bill. Before the second reading came on, my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade gave notice of a resolution, which was carried by the House; the noble Lord

with several of his friends, departing altogether from their votes on the first reading, turned completely round upon their own policy, supported my right hon. Friend, went into the same lobby with him, and made a majority against the Government of Lord Palmerston. If there was any conspiracy then, it was owing to the other side of the House; and if it was a dirty conspiracy, the dirt was imported into it by the noble Lord and his friends. Now, these are inaccuracies which may occur in debate, but I think it was necessary to make an apology to the right hon. Gentleman, and to explain the charge which the noble Lord had inadvertently brought against me.

I come now to the question before the House, and the resolution which has been moved by the Member for Chester. Whatever are the words in which a resolution or design is wrapped up in this House, the true meaning of it generally comes out during the debate; but the noble Lord the Member for Chester did not in the slightest degree leave us in difficulty with respect to his view; and there can be nothing more clear than this—I do not in the slightest degree blame him for it—he has a perfect right to his opinion—that he stands as the principal opponent of this measure, on the ground either that he is opposed to all Reform, or to such an extension of the franchise as the Government propose in this Bill; and I presume, if the truth were known, and judging from his speech, that if the Government would lay on the table of the House the Seats Bill, which may be as extensive with respect to that part of the subject as this measure of the franchise is on another part, it would meet with the strenuous opposition of the noble Lord. Thus the Bill that is not before us is made an excuse and weapon for destroying the Bill that is before us. That, I think, as far as I can judge, is a fair statement of the position of the noble Lord; but when the Seats Bill is laid on the table of the House we shall have an opportunity of knowing what is the course which the noble Lord will take upon it.

I come now to the speech made by the Member for King's Lynn, in seconding the amendment. His speech was much more ingenious, and it was much less candid; it was much less straightforward, but it lands us in the same position; and the noble Lord during his speech, twice at least, if not oftener, used the words the 'balance of power' in reference to the representation of the people in this House. We have done now pretty much with the balance of power on the Continent of Europe. I hope the time will come when we shall have no such phrase as the 'balance of power' in this House.

Sir, I think that this House should be a fair representation of the people of this country, and though it may not be desirable, and even if desirable it may not be attainable, that all persons should vote, yet, far short of that, I am persuaded that the representation may be so arranged that every person of every class will feel that his interests are fairly represented, and will be fairly consulted by the House. But the noble Lord is afflicted with a species of terror, or perhaps I should rather call it a feeling of no confidence, such as I have hardly ever seen before in this House. He has no confidence in the Government. That I have very often seen, and I have seen him in a Government in which the majority of the House had no confidence; but he has no confidence in the House. First of all the Government, through the Prime Minister and through the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have given the most distinct promise with regard to the Bill for the re-arrangement of seats; but the noble Lord has no confidence in that promise. The noble Lord has no confidence in the House, because if this Franchise Bill should pass, he thinks the House might do something very unwise in the matter of the Seats Bill. He has no confidence in the people, because the object of this Bill is to admit them to the franchise; and he has special terror

of what might happen if the Franchise Bill should pass and the Seats Bill fail, and we should all be sent back to enlarged constituencies to be returned to a future Parliament. The noble Lord must know that, whatever be the rearrangements of seats, it must lead to greater popular power in the House; and that whatever be the extension of the franchise, it must lead to the same result; and we all know that henceforth the Parliament which shall be elected on an extended franchise, or after a redistribution of seats, will be a Parliament of full authority in the country—that it will have power still further to extend the franchise, and still further to alter the distribution of seats, and to conduct all matters connected with the legislation of the Empire. And therefore the noble Lord, who was in such extraordinary tremor with regard to what may happen if this Bill pass or if the other fail, appears to me to present the most singular exhibition of political anxiety I have ever seen.

I thought that when the noble Lord concluded his speech, everything in it that was true was unimportant, and everything that seemed to be the least important was not true. But there is one thing important, and that is the opposition of the noble Lord to this Bill; and I hope that he and his colleague in proposing this resolution will forgive me if I say that I think it is a perilous thing when the heirs of two of the most ancient and the most wealthy and powerful of the houses of the English nobility oppose themselves to this moderate and just Bill, and have set themselves by a coalition in this House to drive Lord Russell from power—for this, and this only, offence—that he wields the authority of his great office to extend in what I believe to be a moderate and conservative degree the franchises of his countrymen.

The noble Lord the Member for Chester blames the Government because it took advice from this end of this side of the House [below the gangway of the Ministerial side], and did not confine itself to the advice of powerful persons of the Whig party. I should think that a measure which is supported by the House of Bedford, by the House of Devonshire, that has among its supporters the Howards, the Sutherlands, the Duke of Somerset, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Clarendon, Lord Granville, Lord Stanley the Postmaster-General, and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department—I think a measure that is supported by the Peers that I have mentioned cannot be said to be introduced to this House without some consultation with the Whig party. Now, if the noble Lord will allow me in a perfectly friendly manner to give him a little advice, I will do it in one sentence. The course that he is taking is a course which tends to separate important persons of the Whig party from the Liberal and popular party in this House and in the country, and if he should succeed in dissevering the most intelligent of the Whig nobility from the great popular party in the country, if he should transfer them to the other side, and put all the dukes and the nobles on one side of Parliament, and the popular party on the other—if the noble Lord knows anything whatever of history, he will know this,—that when the great popular party of a country are fighting by themselves against the nobles of a country, whatever their virtues and whatever their power—speaking of many of them—you may rely upon it that the popular party will win, and the nobles will go down.

The noble Lord and many hon. Members of the House during this debate have referred to the supposed influence I have had as to the mode in which this question has been brought before Parliament. Seven years ago, just about the time when the Government of Lord Derby was thrown out, in an accidental or incidental conversation with Lord Russell, I suggested to him that whenever this question was brought again before Parliament, the

proper course to take was to introduce the Franchise Bill by itself. From 1860 until this hour I have only had one interview—a very short interview—and only one conversation of a political character with Lord Russell, and until he mentioned the matter at the meeting of his supporters the other day in Downing-street, I must confess to the House that I was totally in ignorance of the fact that the course of the Government in this matter had been in any degree influenced by anything I have said. It was at a meeting at Rochdale in January last that I advised not only the Government to take this course, but that I advised all persons who were in favour of Reform in the kingdom to consider the question and to support this course if it should be taken by the Government. I will tell the House with the most complete candour and fairness what were the reasons which led me to give this advice. I will assume that the House is in favour of Reform. I know what a stretch of imagination is necessary in order to come to that conclusion. But as I am speaking not only to Gentlemen in this House, but to some who are outside this House, I shall treat the question just as if we were all in favour of some measure of Reform, but differed a little as to the mode and extent.

When I suggested to Earl Russell six years ago that he should bring in a Franchise Bill first, he replied that if he did so the opponents of Reform would make use of that plan of action to oppose the Government altogether. They would submit a resolution to the House, in all probability, to the effect that they will not proceed with any measure to extend the franchise till they see before them everything that the Government has to propose on the subject of Reform. The noble Lord knows perfectly well the tactics of hon. Gentlemen opposite, but, notwithstanding that knowledge, he has thought it his duty to introduce the Franchise Bill first, and ask the House to take the question of the redistribution of seats at a later period. Now let us consider why he should do that. If you will carry back your recollection to the year 1848, when a resolution was proposed by Mr. Hume, and come down step by step from that period until the occasion of the introduction of the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds last year, you will see that the great question, so far as it is to be regarded as a great popular question, and as it was discussed at public meetings, has all along been much more a question of the franchise than of the seats. The pledges of Governments and of Parliament have been not so much pledges to the middle classes that their share of political power should be rendered more equal by a redistribution of seats, but more distinctly and fully they have been pledged to the working classes, which are now excluded, that they should at some early day be admitted in some fair numbers to the franchise.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster (Mr. Mill), and I think all within this House will agree, that apart from any effect in respect to the choice of Members which you may hope to produce by any measure for the extension of the franchise, it is a thing desirable in the highest degree that there should be an extension of the franchise so far that the working-people might feel that they were not purposely excluded. What I want is to give the sense of justice to a great class now labouring under a sense of long-continued injustice. And that is essential to be done, although that might not change the seat of any Member in this House, and although the distribution were as equal as it can be made, and there were no other Reform necessary but on this single measure of the franchise. The House will see that there is an essential difference between the two questions. The extension of the franchise affects a peculiar portion of the population, and the redistribution of seats does not; it affects all—the higher, the middle, and the lower classes

(as to a portion of them) alike. It is not a class question, and therefore is not pressed with the same force and resolution, as a great measure of justice, which the question of the franchise has received.

An hon. Gentleman who once sat on the other side is of opinion that when you come to consider the redistribution of the seats you will find that a larger amount of power ought to be given to the counties. No doubt the counties ought to receive more Members, and so ought some of the largest boroughs, and some new boroughs ought to be created. All that is necessary for the fair representation of all classes, but not as matter of justice to any special and peculiar class. The other matter comes before us with a claim far more pressing. I will not say far more righteous, but certainly far more urgent. Then another reason why this course should be adopted is one which any Member of the Government would see at once; and as a supporter of the Government I will take the liberty of stating it. It is very much more simple than if this measure were mixed up with another great question. We all know perfectly well whether in our view it is desirable to reduce the franchise or not, from 10*l.* to 8*l.* or to 7*l.* We can form an opinion on that point; and it does not matter for that purpose whether there is any redistribution of seats or not. I could frame a measure, and so could the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire, which would give a vote to every man in the kingdom, and yet the redistribution of seats could be so made that the representation should be infinitely worse than it is at present. When you have argued the question of the suffrage and settled it, you stand and will stand free to deal with the question of the redistribution of seats. And if you think to juggle the public by giving the suffrage with the one hand and with the other preventing the fair representation of the people by an unjust redistribution, you will not be reforming the constitution of this House, but you will be making the people more dissatisfied with Parliament than they have been in past times.

Another reason why I think the Government were justified in the course which they have taken, is that they did not wish to combine the various classes of opponents to the different branches of Reform into an opposition of the extension of the franchise. They thought that a Bill which would get rid of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty seats, would be a matter of great difficulty to those Members who represented seats that would be disfranchised by such a Bill. But yet they felt they might fairly ask the aid of the Members for the small boroughs to do justice to the excluded class, and open the franchise fully and fairly to the people. I have heard a rumour that amongst those who are likely to vote upon the amendment of the Member for Chester, with only one exception, there will not be a single representative of any small boroughs which are likely to be disfranchised by the Bill which the Government have promised to lay upon the table. Therefore, the Members for the small boroughs, wherever they sit, and whosoever they are on this side of the House, have not shown any hostility to an extension of the franchise, whatever may be their course when the Distribution of Seats Bill makes its appearance on the table.

I shall have to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman opposite on a point to which I am about to address myself. I think that a Franchise Bill which does not adjust this question for a period at least as long as the Bill of 1832 settled the question of Reform, is a Franchise Bill which it is not desirable for this House to consent to. I think, further, that a Distribution of Seats Bill which will not settle that question as long as the Franchise Bill will settle the question of franchise, is not a desirable Bill for this House to pass. It seems to me that after you have settled the franchise and come to discuss the question of seats, Parliament and the public directing its eye to that one question, it would

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be much more likely that the question of seats could be settled so far, that for thirty, and it may be for fifty, years no further change would be required. I believe that if Parliament were honestly disposed to amend the representation, they could do it infinitely better, more solidly, more satisfactorily to the people, with greater duration to our legislation, by taking the course proposed by the Government, than by taking that proposed by the amendment of the Member for Chester or the course proposed by hon. Gentlemen opposite, which, I suppose, is to get rid of this Bill and the Government by the same vote. I believe that the argument which I have laid before the House—not so clearly as I could have wished—had the effect of inducing a great number of Reformers in the country to approve of the course which the Government has taken; and I believe now, that if I were addressing the hon. Gentlemen opposite as friends of Reform, and if they were its friends, that argument would be conclusive. But if they are not friends of Reform, of course I must content myself with saying what I have to say, and with leaving it to make a very small impression upon understandings not prepared, I fear, to receive the truth in this matter.

I said I must quote the right hon. Gentleman that I see opposite me. My own honest opinion is that the course which has been pursued by the Government is one of true Conservatism. I think nothing can be less Conservative than that Parliament should have these questions of representation, questions affecting the basis of power, discussed in this House during every session, and discussed throughout the country during every Parliamentary recess. There were some striking things said in this House on the 1st of March in the year 1859, when two right hon. Gentlemen (Mr. Henley and Mr. Walpole) who sit opposite withdrew from the Government of Lord Derby and explained to the House the grounds of that withdrawal. The Member for Oxfordshire made use of these observations:—

'If one thing can be more destructive to our Constitution than another it will be to have a Reform Bill every few years; and that will be the case if you cannot settle your system upon such grounds that you can reasonably hope that it will stand, I do not say for a long time—finality is out of the question—but for a decent number of years. If you cannot do that, you will lay the foundation for revolution.'

The foundation for revolution in almost every country, unless history lies dreadfully, has been laid by those who have pretended to be specially Conservative. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman. I say there never was a sentence uttered in this House of more undoubted wisdom than that which he spoke on that occasion. I should like to ask the House why it is that we are now involved in this question of Reform. [Derisive cries from the Opposition.] Yes, I will answer hon. Gentlemen immediately. The reason is this—because there is a feeling universal throughout the country that the whole number of electors is much too small to afford a satisfactory representation of the people, and that the largest class in the country, that class which makes the nation, is specially excluded.

I shall show hon. Gentlemen opposite that this is so by referring to a Bill of their own leaders and of their own Ministry. It was on the twenty-eighth of February, 1859, that the Member for Buckinghamshire stood up at this table to propose a Reform Bill on behalf of the Conservative party, of which he is the leader in this House. He quoted on that occasion no less than three Queen's speeches, and he told us that three Prime Ministers had stated distinctly that it was necessary to do something on this question. And that there may be no mistake, for there is a peculiarity in the way the right hon. Gentleman has put it, I will read to you the question he asked of the House. After descanting on the previous attempts,

which every Minister thinks it necessary to do—after quoting three Queen's speeches—he says:—

'Were you to allow this question, which the Sovereign had three times announced was one that ought to be dealt with, which three Prime Ministers, among the most skilful and authoritative of our statesmen, have declared it was their intention to deal with, to remain in abeyance?'

The answer he would give of course is—No; we could not let it remain in abeyance. But since then there have been three other Royal speeches in which the same thing has been said with increased emphasis, and three other Prime Ministers have declared their intention to deal with it.

What is the subject to which the right hon. Gentleman refers when he puts in this form the inquiry 'Are you to allow this question to remain in abeyance?' I maintain that it is the question of the suffrage—the question of the franchise. What did the right hon. Gentleman deal with? He gave, according to his own statement, a Franchise Bill of the largest proportions—so largely proportioned that it dwarfs the measure of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What did the right hon. Gentleman do with regard to the seats? He altered fifteen seats. It was no redistribution at all. It was a ludicrous attempt to arrange the question of the redistribution of seats. Gentlemen opposite have forgotten these words of the right hon. Gentleman. They would be a great deal wiser if they remembered some of the things which the Member for Buckinghamshire tells them. The right hon. Gentleman proposed that the county franchise should be reduced to 10*l*., and he said it would extend the franchise in counties by not fewer than 200,000 electors. And 200,000 is the exact number which the Chancellor of the Exchequer expects to be added to the county electors by the Bill now before the House. What did the right hon. Gentleman do with regard to the borough franchise? He proposed that everybody who had an income of 10*l*. a-year from the Funds, from Bank Stock, or from East India Stock, or Bonds, should be enfranchised. It would be easy to show what a very foolish idea of enfranchisement that was; because it is capable of distinct proof that any man who chose to invest 5,000*l*., or 6,000*l*., for which he would receive a steady interest, might enfranchise all his family, from his grandfather to his youngest son, and even include all his uncles, nephews, and first cousins. And those persons would be enfranchised by a fraud it would be impossible to detect. He proposed that every person who had invested 60*l*. in a Savings-bank, even for one year, should have a vote. Thirdly, he proposed that pensioners in receipt of 20*l*. should have a vote. Fourthly, he proposed that persons occupying part of a house—that is, lodgers paying a sum of 20*l*.—should have a vote. The right hon. Gentleman also proposed that graduates of universities, ministers of religion, members of the various branches of the legal profession, medical men and schoolmasters having certificates, should have votes.

We will not discuss whether that was a proper extension of the suffrage. If you like I will admit that every person included there—barring cases of fraud—would be suitable for the franchises. I am afraid of using the word 'suitable,' the hon. and learned Member for Belfast objects altogether to that—but I will admit that, according to my notion, and according to the notion of the majority of the House, all such persons, with the exception I have mentioned, would be proper persons to have votes. At what did the right hon. Gentleman estimate the number that would be added to the borough electors? At no less than 300,000. That is fifty per cent. more than is proposed to be added to the borough electors by the Bill now on the table—perhaps not exactly of the same class of persons. But whether you give the franchise to A or to B, it is equally an extension of the franchise. And when the Member for Buckingham-

shire was asked, towards the close of the discussion on the first night, what he thought would be the total addition to the number of electors in England and Wales, he said the increase, no doubt, would be very considerable—exceeding half a million, he had no hesitation in saying. In answer to the Royal speeches, in deference to what three Prime Ministers had said, and in accordance with the inquiry 'Can the question any longer be left in abeyance?' what did the Government of Lord Derby do? They introduced a Franchise Bill, which I do not here undertake to approve or condemn—that is not necessary for my argument—they introduced a Franchise Bill that would increase the electoral body by not less than half a million—100,000 more than the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to admit by the Bill which he has laid on the table. Am I not therefore justified in saying that the Bill of the Member for Buckinghamshire was in fact a Franchise Bill?

What did the right hon. Gentleman do with regard to the seats? He was very chary in telling the House what he wished to do with regard to the seats. He did not wish, I suppose, to shock the Members who represented boroughs he was going to disfranchise. He did not disfranchise the borough of Calne. He did not even disfranchise the borough of Portarlington, for which, after a very exhaustive poll of forty-six votes, my right hon. Friend the Attorney-General for Ireland has been returned to this House. Nay, the right hon. Gentleman defended the borough of Arundel in several sentences of his speech. He said that the noble Lord who represents the borough of Arundel sits here as the representative of 900,000 Catholics in England and Wales. But the borough of Arundel is as much a nomination borough as any in Schedule A of the Reform Bill.

The right hon. Gentleman touched the question of seats so gently that he took only fifteen seats of small boroughs having now two seats, and he made a distribution of them which I need not detail to the House. He distributed them in a way which I am willing to admit was a very fair and satisfactory distribution of them, because he gave four seats to the West Riding of Yorkshire, two seats to South Lancashire, two seats to Middlesex, and he proposed to create seven new boroughs from towns that have a population entitling them to representatives. Therefore I do not complain at all of the way in which he distributed the seats; but my argument goes to show that the Government of Lord Derby felt that the real question involved in their Reform measure was the question of the franchise, and accordingly Lord Derby's Government proposed by their Bill to admit 500,000 new electors and to distribute fifteen seats. I think then that nothing could be more absurd than to suppose that theirs was not a great Franchise Bill—or that it was a Bill for the settlement of the distribution of seats.

Now, if I were to ask the right hon. Gentleman why he touched the seats with so delicate a hand, and if he were to give me a candid and an honest answer, he would say that the difficulties attending the question of the distribution are very much greater than the difficulties attending the question of the franchise; and he would say, I am quite sure, that a Government having to deal with the question, than which none can be more important, and perhaps none can be more difficult, would be justified in taking that course which avoids difficulties as much as possible, and enables Parliament to deal fairly and simply at once with one important branch of it. I will ask hon. Gentlemen opposite and the House—I will ask those Gentlemen on this (the Liberal) side of the House, who are supposed, I hope untruly, to be about to vote with the Member for Chester—do they believe that if the right hon. Gentleman had passed his Bill admitting 500,000 electors, new voters, and distributing fifteen seats, the question of the arrangement of seats would have been settled for

twenty, or ten, or for five years? Is not every man in the House convinced, and is not the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire convinced, that in the very next Parliament elected after the passing of that Bill there would have been propositions submitted to the House declaring that those small boroughs, which had not been touched, were not proper boroughs to return Members to this House, and that a certain number of them should be extinguished and their Members turned over to the populous counties and to the great and populous cities? We should have had exactly what the Member for Oxfordshire wants to avoid. We should have had every year a debate on a new Reform Bill, and a debate on the basis of power; and there would have been contentions between the landowners and the rest of the population who are represented, and probably the right hon. Gentleman who sits on that bench and I, both wishing to do fairly to all parts of the country in this matter, might not have seen distinctly whether more Members should be given to counties or more to boroughs. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer were to add to this Bill those fifteen seats of the Member for Buckinghamshire—that little clause of his in that very short Schedule—do you think the House would agree to pass it?

Will the noble Lord the Member for Chester (Earl Grosvenor) and his colleague who seconded the amendment (Lord Stanley) frankly tell the House that if the distribution clauses of Lord Derby's Bill were added to the Bill of Lord Russell, they would give that Bill their support? If they will undertake to do that, although it might ruin the Government if I said it—still I would give them a little advice, and I would counsel them to take it. You know perfectly well that all this clamour you have been making about the distribution of seats—I am afraid, Sir, there is not exactly a parliamentary term that will enable me to express it with sufficient delicacy—but, at least, one thing you know, you do not impose upon us with that cry. I do not think I felt the slightest satisfaction when the Government proposed to lay upon the table of the House their Bill for the distribution of seats. If I had been a Minister, I think I should have recommended that the Member for Calne, for example, and the Member for Stamford—both of whom must know a good deal about the small boroughs—should have been requested to prepare clauses of disfranchisement for the fair consideration of the House.

It is obvious that if the arguments on which you have opposed this Bill are your honest arguments, you would not support the Bill, though the Chancellor of the Exchequer were to propose to add to it the distribution clauses of the Bill of Lord Derby. And I think you would be wise in refusing it; because although that distribution is, I believe, perfectly satisfactory and fair as far as it goes, yet it would not in any degree settle that question; and I am convinced that the greatest error the House can commit is to agree to something on the question of the franchise and something on the question of the distribution of seats, by which neither the one question nor the other shall be settled. But, Sir, at this moment the Government is assailed by a united party on the other side of the House, with a few recruits from this side I tell hon. Gentlemen opposite that they are not in very good hands. The Member for Buckinghamshire and the Member for King's Lynn are not, in my opinion, councillors to be followed implicitly on this question of Reform; and if anybody doubts it I should call as witnesses the two right hon. Gentlemen to whom I have already referred.

You have before you the Bill of Lord Russell's Government, and you know exactly what it is. You may think quite honestly that the reduction of the franchise is something more than is necessary, and you may even think it is something more than is safe: but you know exactly what it is. ['No, no.']

You have listened with very small attention to the speakers on this side of the House if you do not, at least, know the worst of it. What was the Bill brought in by the Member for Buckinghamshire?—and it had upon every clause of it the impress of his subtle understanding. I will tell you what was said of it by the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Walpole) on that night when he explained to us why he had withdrawn from the Government. He said that their scheme of suffrage was—

'A most dangerous innovation, by giving to temporary and fluctuating occupations a preponderiug influence over property and intelligence, while it throws large masses into the constituencies who are almost exempt from direct taxation.'

That is exactly what your friends have been saying of the Bill of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. And, again, the Member for the University said, and this, I think, was in a letter which he wrote to Lord Derby, and which he read to the House:—

'The measure which the Cabinet are prepared to recommend [and in which he did not, as you know, concur] is one which we should all of us have strongly opposed if either Lord Palmerston or Lord Russell had ventured to bring it forward.'

The right hon. Gentleman knew exactly the character of his colleagues. It was prophetic of the course which they would take, and which they have taken now, in opposition to a Bill which only proposes to admit 400,000 electors, while their own Bill proposed to admit 500,000. Now, the Member for Oxfordshire on the same evening, with regard to the same question, used these remarkable words:—

'I believe that identity of suffrage, which is the principle of the Government Bill, is fatal to the constitution of this country.'

I do not think that anybody in the House during this discussion has gone so far as to say that the reduction of 3*l*. in the borough franchise would be absolutely fatal to the constitution of this country, seeing that five hundred years ago, and less, every freeman being a householder in every borough had a vote for Members to sit in this House. But the two right hon. Gentlemen expressed these opinions of the Bill introduced by the Member for Buckinghamshire, and I say, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues, especially the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn, are condemned out of the mouths of their former colleagues, and ought to be put out of court as advisers on this question.

I shall now ask the attention of the House for a little time to the Bill itself. Hitherto I have been speaking as to the mode in which the Government have proposed to deal with this question. As to the Bill itself, almost everything that has been said has been said in connection with the question of the borough franchise. I omit altogether the sort of frenzy into which the Member for North Staffordshire (Mr. Adderley) worked himself the other night when discussing the question of the county franchise. For aught that I know, a 14*l*. rental franchise in counties may have a very fatal effect in North Staffordshire. I like to take the advice and opinion of men of great experience and great moderation, and it is for this reason that I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire to step for one moment into the witness-box on this matter. He said in the speech to which I have referred:—

'Ever since the Reform Act of 1832 the working-people have been having a less and less share in the representation. They had considerable representation before 1832 through the scot and lot voters and the freemen. They are gradually dying out.'

And turning to those about him he said:—

'I ask my honourable friends near me to consider, if they draw a hard line, and

leave the working-people behind it, how long they think it will stand?'

That was a wise saying, a pertinent question in the year 1859, and it is not less wise and worth considering in the year 1866.

But then the greater part of it is exactly what the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said. The right hon. Gentleman has told the House that the proportionate power of the working-classes in the constituencies has been diminishing since 1832. I believe there can be no doubt of it; and here I must tell the Chancellor of the Exchequer that my opinion is—and I think every Member of the House who represents a borough, excepting the borough of Coventry and perhaps one or two others, must know—that the figures which have been laid before the House by which the percentage of working-men electors is put down at 25 or 26 per cent., are not in any degree to be relied upon, nor are they in any degree accurate. Now, hon. Gentlemen have a perfect right, of course, in assailing the Government, to fight upon the figures which they have laid before them, and the Government would find it very difficult to retreat from the position they have taken up upon those figures. I am not one of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and am not one of a Government responsible for those figures. I am here as an advocate, an honest advocate of a moderate and just reform, and, therefore, I must deal with this question from my own point of view, and speak of it in language based on the convictions which I hold. I will give the House only two cases, and I have not sought for them in the Blue Book or written about the country for them. The first has been presented to this House, I believe, in a petition by the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent. Stoke-upon-Trent, as hon. Gentlemen know, is a borough consisting of three or four neighbouring towns. One of them is the town of Burslem. The Blue Book says that Burslem is a constituency with 680 electors. Of that number 197 are represented to be working-men or artisans, and that they form 29 per cent. of the whole number. But what does this petition, which has been accurately prepared, and which gives the analysis of the register for Burslem, say? It says this: that of the 197 which the Chancellor of the Exchequer's figures represent to be working-men there is 1 publican and 40 beersellers. That is 41 to begin with. I would rather have 40 really hard-working, industrious artisans in any borough than 40 beersellers. But there are grocers and other shopkeepers to the number of 48. There are persons who are put down as cartowners, cowkeepers, tradesmen with assistants, having profits from their capital in their trade, numbering 33; and adding these together and deducting them from the 197, there remain in the town of Burslem not 197 working-men on the register, but 75. You may bring if you like the whole staff of the Poor-law Board, but they cannot alter these figures, and it shall not be my fault if the House discusses this question and decides upon figures that are deceptive and delusive.

Next I will take one other town, and that is the borough of Wakefield. The Blue Book says there are 122 working-men, or rather over 11 per cent. in the borough of Wakefield. But if you will deduct the various classes to which I have referred with regard to Burslem, you will bring the number of 122 in Wakefield down to 35, so that instead of there being 11 per cent. of the present constituency working-men, there are not more than 3 per cent. I was talking the other day to a Member on this side of the House, the Member for Newark. I will not give the figures, for I have not them in my recollection, but I hope he will take some opportunity of stating them to the House. But the return from Newark was sent back, I think, twice, if not three times, for correction, and I think at least one county magistrate was put down amongst the working-men.

The only figures with which I shall trouble the House are these. We have

had the figures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and quite as many more from Gentlemen opposite, and I wish to give the House my figures in a single sentence. The Blue Book says that there are 126,000 working-men upon the register. Some bring these down to one-third that number; but, for the sake of being within the mark, I will call them half. The 126,000 is then brought down to 63,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer calculated that by the repeal of the rate-paying clauses and the system of compounding, persons who pay 10*l.* a year rent, who are now excluded, would be admitted to the number of 60,000. He put all these 60,000 as working-men. There is not a man in any borough in England that believes that is an accurate calculation. I put these down at one-third that number—namely, 20,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that between 10*l.* and 7*l.* there will be admitted 144,000, and he estimates these as being all working-men. We all know that these persons within 7*l.* and 10*l.* are not, cannot, and never have been all working-men, and I reckon that if two-thirds are admitted as working-men that will be as fair a calculation as can be made.

Look at the result. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says when this Bill is passed there will be 330,000 working-men upon the register. I say there will be 179,000. Call them, for easier recollection, 180,000. The newly admitted by this Bill will be 116,000. What will be the gross effect? The whole number of borough electors in England and Wales, if this Bill should pass, upon the calculation of the Blue Book will be 691,000, of whom 180,000 only, or about one-fourth, will be working-men, and therefore that portion of the people which forms at least three-fourths of the whole population will only have one-fourth of the electoral power in the boroughs, and no power whatever worth reckoning in the constituencies of the counties. I shall say no more about these statistics. Having made my calculations, they are as proper to be placed before the House as those of the Chancellor of the Exchequer or any hon. Gentleman opposite. But, after all, there will be in England and Wales more than 4,000,000 of men left out.

I think so much political trepidation—I will say so much political cowardice, if I may be allowed the use of that word—never was exhibited before as in the terror shown by the mover and seconder of this amendment, because 116,000 new voters amongst working-men will be admitted, while more than 4,000,000 will be left out. I am astonished at these alarmist speeches. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire (Sir E. B. Lytton) deals in alarmist speeches. He comes down once or twice during the session, and makes a speech, which gives great satisfaction to the House, provided you do not pay the least attention to what there is in it. I mean that in tone, manner, and imagery we are pleased, but I am grieved when I find the side to which the right hon. Baronet gives his great influence. In the year 1860, the right hon. Gentleman made a speech of a much more alarmist character than the one which he made last week, and therefore we may reckon upon some amendment in his condition. In 1860 he said the Bill that was introduced by Lord John Russell, as a member of Lord Palmerston's Government, was a Bill to admit 'poverty and passion' to the franchise. This is one of his passages:—

'Though we are willing to admit poverty and passion into the franchise, we are not willing to give poverty and passion the lion's share of political power over capital and knowledge.'

That is very much like what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University said of the Bill of the Member for Buckinghamshire. He did not use the words 'poverty and passion,' but he spoke of things that were fatal to the Constitution as being likely to be enacted by the Bill.

The right hon. Baronet once held

very different opinions from these. Many years ago he published a book called 'England and the English.' This is not a very profound, but a very amusing book, and I should like to read to the House a sentence which the right hon. Gentleman put as a motto to the book, which motto, I think, he took from Ben Jonson. The words are—

'I am he
Have measured all the shires of England over,
For to these savages I was addicted
To search their nature and make odd discoveries.'

The discovery which he had made up to 1860 was this: if you introduce artisans and working-men between a 10*l.* and 6*l.* rental, you give the lion's share of the power of representation to the poverty and passion of the country. In his speech last week he did not treat the working-men as if they were made up of poverty and passion, but he used generous words of them, and he told us how there was a tie not only of interest, but of respect and affection, between the rich and the labouring poor; and doubtless this language far more accurately stated his real opinion than when he said that between 6*l.* and 10*l.* the working-men were represented by 'poverty and passion.' But to give them compliments of this kind, and not votes, seems to me to be a thing which will not be well received by the great body of the people, who are asking that at least some of them may be admitted to a representation in this House. It reminds me very much of that couplet which I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will remember from Shenstone—

'He kicked them down stairs with such a sweet grace,
They may think he was handing them up.'

How is it to be conceived that after a speech full of such noble and generous sympathy the right hon. Gentleman concludes to throw all the weight of his character and influence into the side of a party which says little that is kind and generous of this class? [Loud Opposition cries of 'No, no.'] I will say, then, of a party which sometimes does say something generous of the working-class, but never shows the slightest disposition to confer upon it any portion of political rights.

I now ask the attention of the right hon. Gentleman and the House to one point which he touched with great force and great beauty of language in referring to some friends and neighbours of mine—the members of the co-operative societies of Rochdale. When I heard his words I thought he was going back unconsciously to the year 1832, when he was a most enthusiastic supporter of the Reform Bill of that day, and when he was a member of the Parliamentary Candidate Society, with the hon. and learned Member for Sheffield, with Jeremy Bentham, Daniel O'Connell, Francis Place, Charles Buller, and many others. I thought he was going back to that time, but if not so far, that he was at least going back to 1847 and 1848, in both which years he was in favour of an extension of the franchise. Now, what did he say of my neighbours and friends? He said,—

'To artisans of that class, whatever their political creed, I am willing to grant the franchise. Willing, do I say?— that word is much too cold. I wish that, like some old commonwealth of Greece, we could admit them to the franchise by acclamation, to be proud of such fellow-citizens, without asking what rent they pay for their houses.'

I happen to live amongst all these persons of whom the right hon. Gentleman has spoken with so much enthusiasm, and, therefore, if the House will permit me, I will state a little of their case, and I have no objection to rest my case upon theirs. In 1860, in the discussion of the Bill of the Government, I laid some facts connected with these co-operation societies before the House. There are three bodies or companies

managed by three committees. One is called the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society, which chiefly concerns itself in the retail business, and the facts which I am about to give have been supplied to me by the secretary of the society. He says that there are 5,500 members, chiefly heads of families. It has a capital of 85,000*l.*, and it is selling goods and receiving money at the rate of 230,000*l.* per annum. Let the House bear in mind that there is not one of these 5,500 members can have one single farthing of credit. The business is managed by a committee of eleven, of whom two have a borough vote, and one of them is a book-keeper, and is treasurer of the society, and therefore, in a certain sense, he is not exactly what we understand by a working-man. He and another have borough votes, while the president and secretary of this great establishment have no votes. We now come to the Rochdale District Co-operative Corn Mill Society, which does a large business. It has a capital of 60,000*l.*, and turns over 164,000*l.* per annum. It has also a committee of eleven; but neither the president, nor treasurer, nor secretary, nor any one of this committee has a borough vote. One of the committee has a county vote, being probably the owner of a cottage in the neighbourhood. Then there is the Rochdale Co-operative Manufacturing Society, which has more than 1,500 members, or shareholders, and a capital of 109,000*l.* It has built two of the largest and handsomest factories in the neighbourhood, and the meeting in support of this Bill was held in one of them which has not yet received its machinery. This society is also managed by a committee of eleven, of whom three have borough votes, and two have county votes. But of these five voters only one is 'a working-man' in the usual sense. The voters are thus described—one is a manager, one a manufacturer, one a draper, one out of business, and one only is a mechanic. Now, the total capital of these societies is 227,246*l.*, the whole of which has been contributed, or nearly so. by the working-men of Rochdale, of whom the right hon. Gentleman spoke the other night in such glowing language. The secretary writes:—

'The present writer has seen members of the Pioneers' Society, who had scarcely any work or income for the family during the famine, come for 5*s.* or 10*s.* from their investments of previous savings, just to help them on with their small earnings. They did not ask or receive relief. This does not show improvidence or want of forethought. Now that the cotton famine is nearly over, the members are again saving money. In June, 1865, their investments were: In the Pioneers' Society, 59,000*l.*; in September, 1865, 63,000*l.*; in December, 1865, 69,000*l.*; and in March, 1866, they reached 76,602*l.*'

I hope the right hon. Member for Calne will forgive me for reading the next line—'This does not agree with the Lowe theory.'

Now, what is taking place in the Rochdale societies is occurring in greater or less degree in all the societies, of which there are five or six hundred throughout the country. What is the answer which anybody has given to these men? Will you give the same answer which the right hon. Baronet the Member for Hertfordshire gave? Will you receive them with open arms and not ask them whether they pay 7*l.* or 6*l.* for their rental? If hon. Gentlemen are in favour of the extension of the franchise—I exclude the hon. and learned Member for Belfast altogether—to those who are so worthy of it, upon the description of one of your own eminent leaders, will you allow these 5,500 men to have the franchise now in Rochdale? I beg to tell them it would be a great mistake to think that the men in Rochdale are better than those in the other manufacturing towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire. They would altogether scout the idea, and I, who know them as well as most men—and I know a good deal of the working-men of Lancashire and Yorkshire—should say that those at Roch-

dale are a fair sample of the great mass of the industrious, intelligent, and independent population amongst whom we live.

The hon. Member for Wick is terrified at the idea of the votes of these men. Northern breezes and long experience have done nothing for him. He described all the good things which have been done in Parliament during the last twenty years, and he does not seem to be aware that there is not one of those good things which the working-men of Lancashire and Yorkshire did not heartily support. I know not half a dozen Gentlemen opposite who gave any continuous support whatsoever to those good things. The hon. Gentleman puts it to the credit of Parliament that it repealed the Corn-law. If he had consulted my right hon. Friend the President of the Poor Law Board, I think he would have been told that, until Sir Robert Peel abandoned Protection, there never were a hundred Members in the House who gave a vote in favour of the repeal of the Corn-law, and that it was done, as everybody knows now, by an agitation of enormous cost both in money and labour, and by the occurrence of a famine which threw disgrace upon the Government of this country, not because potatoes should have decayed, but that when they did decay a whole population should have run the risk of being destroyed by it. The same men who both out of doors and in Parliament asked for these good measures are the very men who ask for this Bill, and I venture to tell the House that if they do not get this Bill they will get one very much like it.

I shall not ask the attention of the House to more figures, or endeavour to show the inconsistency of any Members on the other side of the House; but I will ask them, if they can, calmly to consider the present position of this question. Look all over the country, and you will find that in a week or a fortnight there have been held more than a hundred public meetings which were unanimous in favour of this Bill. Hon. Gentlemen opposite do not pursue a policy which enables them to hold public meetings. You have had presented many hundred petitions in its favour, with nearly 500,000 signatures appended to them. If the Bill were so destructive, if it struck such terror into the hearts of the people as it seems to have done in the case of the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn—and I believe there was a petition from Lynn signed by a hundred of his constituents in support of his views—if the people felt that the Government were going on a wrong course, that the middle class were to be swamped, and all kinds of evil to follow the passing of this Bill, is it conceivable that numbers of public meetings would not have been held, and that numbers of petitions would not have been signed, praying that the Bill should not pass?

Look at the moderate and reasonable tone of the meetings that have been held. I appeal particularly to the two right hon. Gentlemen I see before me—they are not so stiff as some in the unteachable prejudices of their party, and the tone of their remarks shows that they have a real conviction, and are desirous of acting upon it. Look, then, at the attitude of the people. Suppose when Lord John Russell, in the years previous to 1830, was bringing forward year after year measures for the reform of Parliament—suppose you had accepted some of those propositions, and that Parliament had been to a certain extent reformed, do you not think that would have been a course as wise as to go on heedlessly step by step until you came to the edge of that terrible abyss over which you could not bear to look in 1832? You may always pass a measure with more honour to yourselves and more good to the country in times of peace and tranquillity than in times of force and compulsion; and times of peace and tranquillity are invariably, if not immediately, followed in matters of this description by times of force and compulsion. The right hon. Member for Oxfordshire told you what must happen if you chose to set up a barrier

and thrust the working classes behind it and tell them that that line must for ever separate them from you. You have 1,000,000 electors now, and there are 8,000,000 of grown men in the United Kingdom; can you say that only 1,000,000 shall have votes and that all the rest are to remain excluded? Is the thing possible? The right hon. Member for Huntingdonshire (Gen. Peel) seems to think it is possible; but he knows it is not possible. He has before him the example of an illustrious member of his own family, who thought it possible to maintain the principle of Protection by the Corn-law, and who, finally, after doing everything he could, after violating his own convictions for years in fighting the battles of his party, was compelled at last to surrender, and to admit to the humblest man in the country, and the poorest weaver, that he, the great Minister of State in this country, had not comprehended the question of the Corn-laws so well as the working-men of England comprehended it.

Are you resolved—and this is the question we are in fact now discussing—that the bolts shall be kept in that door, and that the mass of the people shall be forced to remain on the other side of it? The hon. and learned Member for Belfast told us that there should be, not a representation of the people, but a representation of classes. If the hon. and learned Gentleman gave opinions in a court of law no sounder than he gives us here on the question of the Constitution, depend upon it he never would have been enabled to reach the high position he now holds in his profession. He knows perfectly well there never was such a thing as a representation of classes in the Commons House of Parliament; we should have been called the House of Classes, or something equally absurd, if anything so absurd ever had existed. He knows perfectly well that in the times previous to the usurpations of the Tudors and the Stuarts, every freeman resident, being a householder in a borough, had a vote for a representative in that House. He knows, also, that the first Parliament of Charles I. declared—and it is now on record in the journals—that the franchise of common right rested with the inhabitant householders of boroughs. Though he contended that the quotation I made from Lord Somers did not bear the meaning I attached to it, yet if we come down to the men of fifty or sixty years ago, he will not deny that all the leading Liberal men of that period were in favour of the extension of the suffrage far beyond that which is proposed in this Bill.

There is much that I think shows you are hurrying to times of difficulty and peril. If you look at what is passing in the United States you will see that there is a question which is causing great difficulties, just as this question is causing them here. It is proposed that the 4,000,000 negroes of the United States shall have these rights granted to them; that they shall no longer be bought and sold; that they may change their employment and their master; that they may sue or be sued in a court of law, and may give evidence in a court of justice. Beyond that their rights are not at present to go, and those who were their masters not two years ago, and who bought and sold them, are not willing, for reasons which they think sufficient, to grant them the franchise, which is universal in that country. The franchise never has been universal in this country. It is not necessary that it should be; but we have a representative Constitution, and we are the House of Commons, and if the Throne be sacred in its dignity, and if the Peers be unmolested in their privileges, the House of Commons remains the safeguard of the Constitution, and those who are sent here sit by right of free election by the commonalty of this kingdom.

You may defeat this Bill. I am not at all learned in Parliamentary computations, but there are hon. Gentlemen on both sides who can tell exactly what the majority for or against this Bill will

be. I will admit fully that you can reject this Bill, defeat the Government, and drive Lord Russell from office. The right hon. Gentleman has no doubt somewhere a Parliamentary Bradshaw —all his lines converge to Downing-street. We have let him in once or twice, indeed, but had very soon afterwards to expel him from that paradise of official men. If the right hon. Gentleman goes to Downing-street, are you prepared to say that there shall be no Reform, or that the right hon. Gentleman and his friends, who in 1859 proposed measures which their most experienced colleagues declared to be fatal to the Constitution, shall again deal with this question? Does not conduct like this always break up a party? When you come to deal with the question of Reform you will find difficulties; if you resolve not to deal with it, your difficulties will not be less. Whatever is said in this House, whether the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer carries this Bill or not, there still remains the nation outside this House, and there still remains the great question of Parliamentary Reform.

I believe there never was a Bill submitted to this House by a Government connected with the Liberal party which it was more clearly the duty and the interest of what is called the Conservative party to support. In 1832 the then Tory party opposed the Bill; they went to their constituencies and were mostly destroyed for a time. If this Bill passes, the enlarged constituencies will not look very favourably upon Gentlemen who tried to prevent the Bill from passing. When you see a man like Lord Russell, who was the chief supporter of the Bill of 1832, who promoted it years before it made its appearance, and who proposed it on behalf of the Government—when you see him, knowing certainly as much of this question as any man in this House—when you see him convinced of the necessity of doing something on this question, and offering a Bill so reasonable as this, I cannot help saying, either that hon. Gentlemen are misled by their leaders, or that they have driven their leaders into a course which I think is pernicious to the true interests of their party. Perhaps there never was a Bill which more fairly accommodated itself to the advancing intelligence of the people. There is not a whisper of dissatisfaction with it. [Cries of 'Oh!'] I speak of those persons who are in favour of any improvement of the representation; and so far as I have been able to learn or gather, even those who are called Conservatives throughout the country, are weary of the perpetual discussion of this question, and would be glad that it could be settled on the terms which the Government has proposed.

I did not rise with the expectation that I should convince hon. Gentlemen that they are wrong and that I am right; the most that I can hope for is that some fact or some argument may find a lodgment in some mind, and may moderate hostility to a proposal which I think the country requires, and the country is anxious to receive. I have not spoken in favour of the Government. I have said that I think their figures are wrong and untrue—injurious to their own Bill and their own case. Now, will the House believe for once that I am speaking to them from no party spirit, from no desire to do anything in the country or to the country more than they would wish? My view of the public interest is at least as conscientious and as honest as theirs can be. I have been misrepresented, and condemned, and denounced by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and by not a few writers in their press. My conscience tells me that I have laboured honestly only to destroy that which is evil, and to build up that which is good. The political gains of the last twenty-five years, as they were summed up the other night by the hon. Member for Wick (Mr. Laing), are my political gains, if they can be called the gains in any degree of any living Englishman.

And if now, in all the great centres of our population—in Birmingham with

its busy district—in Manchester with its encircling towns—in the population of the West Riding of Yorkshire—in Glasgow and amidst the vast industries of the West of Scotland—and in this great Babylon in which we are assembled—if we do not find ourselves surrounded by hungry and exasperated multitudes—if now, more than at any time during the last hundred years, it may be said, quoting the beautiful words of Mr. Sheridan, that—

'Content sits basking on the cheek of toil'—

if this House, and if its statesmen glory in the change, have I not as much as any living man some claim to partake of that glory? I know, and every thoughtful man among you knows, and those Gentlemen who sit on that bench and who are leading you to this enterprise, they know that the policy I have urged upon the House and upon the country, so far as it has hitherto been accepted by Parliament, is a policy conservative of the public welfare, strengthening the just authority of Parliament, and adding from day to day fresh lustre and dignity to the Crown. And now, when I speak to you and ask you to pass this Bill—when I plead on behalf of those who are not allowed to speak themselves in this House—if you could raise yourselves for this night, for this hour, above the region of party strife—if you could free yourselves from the pestilent atmosphere of passion and prejudice which so often surrounds us here, I feel confident that at this moment I should not plead in vain before this Imperial Parliament on behalf of the English constitution and the English people.

REFORM.

VIII.

BIRMINGHAM, AUGUST 27, 1866.

[A great open-air meeting was held in Birmingham on the 27th of August, 1866, to pass resolutions in favour of Reform. It was calculated that more than 150,000 men were present at it. In the evening a great meeting was held in the Town Hall of Birmingham, at which an Address of confidence was presented to Mr. Bright, and at which this speech was spoken.]

I ACCEPT the Address which has just been presented to me with feelings which I shall not attempt to express. I accept it as ample compensation for whatsoever labours I have expended in your service, and I shall take it from this meeting, and hold it as a constant stimulus to whatsoever labours may lie in my path in your service for the future. There are times when I feel no little despondency at the small result of many years of public labour; but to look upon a meeting like that assembled here, and to look upon that vast gathering which your town has exhibited to the country and to the world to-day, is enough to dispel every feeling of fear or of despondency, and to fill the heart and nerve the arm to new and greater labours for the future.

During the last session of Parliament, in the debate on the second reading of the Franchise Bill, I took the opportunity of offering a word of counsel and of warning to the powerful party in the House which opposed that Bill. In those words of warning and of counsel I asked them to remember that if they should succeed in defeating that Bill and overthrowing the Government, there would still remain the people of England to be met, and the claims of the great question of Reform to be considered and settled. We have not had to wait long before that which I foretold has come to pass. In London we have seen assemblies of the people such as for a generation past have not been witnessed. In many other parts of the country there have been meetings greater than have been seen for thirty years, and notably to-day there has been a voice given forth from the very centre and heart of England which will reach at least to the circumference of the three kingdoms. There has been an attempt to measure the numbers that are present in this Hall at this moment. There are probably six thousand persons here. I ask any who were present to-day to reckon how many times this Hall could have been filled from that multitudinous congregation upon which our eyes rested, but to the full extent of which they could scarcely reach. It is highly probable that it might have been filled forty times from that vast number. Yes, and at this moment I am told that outside there is an audience far greater than that I now address; whilst to-morrow morning

there will be millions of an audience throughout the whole of the United Kingdom, anxious to know what has been done and what has been said on this 27th day of August in this great town of Birmingham.

We are not here to-night to discuss the question of Reform, because that is a question which we have already settled. What we have to do is to discuss calmly our present position and our future work in reference to this great question. My hon. Colleague has said that the Bill of the late Government was one of singular moderation. It was also a Bill—I speak now only of the Franchise Bill—of a singular and most honest simplicity; and that was the great reason that I felt it my duty, and that you felt it yours, to give it an honest support. I will just tell you how much and how little it proposed to give, or would have given, to the working-classes of this country; and I think it necessary to state this because of the argument which I intend to raise upon it. The Government produced to the House of Commons a Blue Book, most elaborately compiled, and as far as I know, with the exception of one point, correct and trustworthy; but they proposed to inform the House of the number of working-men who are now upon the register, and what addition would be made to that number if the Bill passed. I differed entirely from their estimate, which I believe to have been to a very great extent erroneous, and I think I produced facts in the House of Commons which sustained my opinion.

Mr. Gladstone told us that at present there are on the borough registers in England and Wales working-men to the number of 126,000. He showed, further, that by the abolition of the rate-paying clauses, if there was no alteration in the 10*l.* suffrage, there would be an addition of 60,000 electors, who, he reckoned, would all be working-men; and then he said that if the franchise was reduced from 10*l.* to 7*l.*, there would be a further addition of 144,000, all of whom he estimated as working-men. Therefore he stated that when that Bill passed there would be on the borough registers of England and Wales 330,000 working-men, of whom 204,000 would be new voters added by that Bill. I believe that estimate was made with perfect honesty by Mr. Gladstone, but that it was to a very large extent erroneous. I showed several boroughs, and I believe I might have gone through almost every borough in the United Kingdom, where the number of working-men stated in the returns was at least double, and in many cases far more than double, the actual number upon the register. I estimated, also, that although the abolition of the rate-paying clauses might add 60,000 new votes, it would be very unfair to expect that more than one-third, or 20,000 of them—being ten-pounders and upwards—would be of the class of working-men. I said, further, that it was absurd to reckon that every man between 10*l.* and 7*l.* was of the class of working-men, and I supposed that at least no more than two-thirds of them could be placed in that list. My estimate differed, therefore, from Mr. Gladstone's thus far. I said that of the 126,000 now upon the register there were not more than the half, or 63,000; instead of there being 60,000 admitted by the abolition of the rate-paying clause, there would not be more than 20,000; and that, instead of there being 144,000 working-men admitted by the reduction of the franchise from 10*l.* to 7*l.*, it was a fair estimate to take two-thirds of that number, or 96,000. My opinion therefore was, that when that Bill passed, if it should pass, there would be upon the borough registers of England and Wales, not 330,000 of working-men, but 179,000, and that the Bill would not admit 204 000, but only 116.000 of that class. Take either my estimate of 116,000 or Mr. Gladstone's estimate of 204,000 as the number of working-men to be added by the late Bill to the register, and I will ask you what, after all, does it all come to? 204,000 working-men according to the Government estimate,

116,000 according to mine, and in addition about 200,000 new voters added to the counties under a 14*l.* franchise, who must of necessity be almost altogether outside the working-classes. That was the Bill which my hon. Colleague has described as one of singular moderation. Out of five or six millions of men in the United Kingdom who are not now enfranchised, the whole number of the working-classes to be admitted in the boroughs of England and Wales was only 200,000.

Now that Bill, so moderate that I confess I had entertained the hope that it would pass through Parliament without any great difficulty, was resisted as if it had been charged with all the dangerous matter which the Tory party actually attributed to it. It was intrigued against in a manner—I had almost said more base, but I will say more hateful, than any measure I have seen opposed during the twenty-three years that I have sat in the House of Commons; and, finally, under every kind of false pretence, it was rejected by a small majority, and fell, and with it the Government which had proposed it also fell. The reason I have given you these figures is that I want to show you the desperate resolution of the present Government, and of the party which it represents, to deny to the working-classes of this country any share in its government. I am not confined to the votes of the House and the destruction of the Bill, but I am able, I think, to show you by the arguments on which the Tory party proceeded that such is their determination, and it may be their unchangeable resolution.

Several of the speakers to-night have referred to the slanders heaped upon the great body of the people during the discussions of the last session; and, no doubt, although his name was not mentioned, the speakers had in their minds one Member of the House who virtually has no constituency—whose sole constituent, at any rate at that time, is now no longer here to partake of the strife or the contests of politics, though I presume another constituent acts and reigns in his stead. If I quote anything that Mr. Lowe said, understand me that I wish to bring no charge against him whatsoever. He has spent some years in Australia, and probably has voyaged round the world; and I do not deny him the right to voyage round the world of politics, and to cast anchor in any port that may be pleasant to him. I merely intend to quote something that he said, because when it was said it was received with rapturous enthusiasm by that great party in the House who are the supporters of Lord Derby and of Mr. Disraeli. This is extracted from the *Times* newspaper, a paper in which, as is well known, the speaker has been for many years an eminent writer, and over which, unless reports speak untruly, he has no small degree of control. He says:—

'I have had opportunities of knowing some of the constituencies of this country, and I ask if you want venality, ignorance, drunkenness, and the means of intimidating—if you want impulsive, unreflecting, violent people—where would you go to look for them? To the top or to the bottom? It is ridiculous to blink the fact that since the Reform Act the great corruption has been among the voters between 20*l.* and 10*l.* rental—the lodging-house and beerhouse keepers; . . . but it is said, Only give the franchise to the artisan and then see the difference.'

He goes on—passing a sentence containing a classical illustration which amused the House, but which it is not necessary to quote here. He said:—

'You know what sort of persons live in these small houses' [houses, of course, between 10*l.* and 7*l.*] 'We have long had experience of them under the name of freemen, and it would be a good thing if they were disfranchised altogether. They were dying out of themselves, but the Government propose to bring them back again under another name, so that the effect of passing this Bill would be—first, to increase corruption, intimidation, and

all the evils that happen usually in election; and next that the working-men of England, finding themselves in a full majority of the whole constituency, will awake to a full sense of their power, and say, "We can do better for ourselves. Don't let us any longer be cajoled at elections. Let us set up shop for ourselves. We have objects to carry as well as our neighbours, and let us unite to carry those objects. We have the machinery. We have our trades-unions. We have our leaders ready. We have the power of combination as we have shown over and over again, and when we have a prize to fight for we will bring it to bear with tenfold more force than ever before."'

These are the sentiments which, uttered in my hearing, were received with enthusiastic approbation by the great body of the Tory party and by the supporters of the present Government. Observe what it really means. It is that voters now between 20*l.* rental and 10*l.* are so bad that if you go lower something like ruin will ensue. That there will be more venality, ignorance, and drunkenness; and then, speaking to the House of Commons—in which the landed proprietors, or the bulk of them, have always acted as a general trades-union, where they raised the price of bread and diminished the size of the loaf as long as the people would let them—he says there will be combinations of working-men for their special objects, and therefore—mind, this is his conclusion—shut them out for ever; bolt the door; say, loudly and boldly, you, the Parliament of England, to the 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 men who have now no vote, and whom we pretend to represent, 'No one of you who cannot pay a rental of 10*l.* shall ever speak by his direct representative within the walls of this House.' That is the policy which Mr. Lowe recommends. It is not important at all because Mr. Lowe recommends it. It is important only because it has been accepted and approved by the great Tory party in Parliament. However, I say—I who am charged with designs against the safety of the institutions of this country—I say it is a dangerous policy—a policy which enforced in other countries has done great things. Through it crowns and coronets have sometimes been lost, and I am not sure that it is a policy which can be safely maintained with us.

I asked one of the most intelligent and excellent Frenchmen with whom I am acquainted, one of the most confidential friends of the dynasty of Louis Philippe and of the Orleans family, what it was that drove that family from France, and I referred to stories of corruption among ministers and other things which had been circulated in public and in private. He said: 'None of these things did it. It was the attempt of the King to govern France by a parliament that represented an insignificant minority of the people, and which parliament he thought he could perpetually manage by a judicious distribution of patronage.' On the principle of governing this country by a Parliament elected by an insignificant minority of the people, Lord Derby comes into office, and judging from the speeches and the votes of the last session of Parliament, his party intends as long as possible to govern upon that principle and that policy.

Working-men in this hall, I wish my voice had been loud enough to have said what I am about to say to the vast multitude which we looked on this day; but I say it to them through the press, and to all the working-men of this kingdom, I say that the accession to office of Lord Derby is a declaration of war against the working-classes. The course taken in London the other day by the police, and it had almost been by the military, is an illustration of the doctrines and the principles of the Derby administration. They reckon nothing of the Constitution of their country—a Constitution which has no more regard to the Crown or to the aristocracy than it has to the people—a Constitution which regards the House of Commons,

fairly representing all the nation, as important a part of the governmental system of this kingdom as either the House of Lords or the Throne itself. If they thus despise the Constitution they likewise despise the claims of five or six millions who are unrepresented. You may work, you may pay taxes, you may serve in the army, and fight; 70,000 or more of your brethren are now living under the burning sun of India, and twice as many more are serving in the ranks in different parts of the world; and you, the great body of the people from whom these men are drawn, are not considered worthy to do so simple an act as to give a vote in your great town for your present or any future Members. You are to have no vote, no share in the government; the country you live in is not to be your country. You are like the Coolies or the Chinese who are imported into the West Indies or California. You are to work, but you are not to take root in the country, or to consider the country as your country; and, worse than all this, in addition to this refusal of the commonest right of the Constitution, you are insulted by the cheers which a great party have given to the language which I have read to you to-night. You are to be told that you are so ignorant and so venal, so drunken, so impulsive, so unreflecting, and so disorderly, that it is not even safe to skim off as it were the very cream of you to the number of 116,000, or it may be of 204,000, and to admit them to a vote for Members of the House of Commons.

This is the Tory theory. This is the faith of Lord Derby and his party, and I maintain that I am not saying a word that is an exaggeration of the truth, for I have heard that party over and over again vociferously cheer sentiments such as I have described. The Government which has been overturned was a very different Government. Lord Russell had no fear of freedom. He could much more easily be persuaded to give up, and he would much more willingly abandon for ever the name of Russell than he would give up his hereditary love of freedom. The Government, which was led by Earl Russell in one House and by Mr. Gladstone in the other, was founded and acted upon the principle of trust and confidence in the people. Some said there was not much difference between the Derby Government and the Russell Government. Lord Derby asked Lord Clarendon to take office in his Government. There was something charming in the very audacity of Lord Derby's effrontery. Lord Clarendon was an eminent Minister of the Government that brought in a Bill which the Tory party declared to be subversive of the Constitution; and Lord Derby asks Lord Clarendon to keep the Foreign Office in the new Government!

The Government of Lord Derby in the House of Commons sitting all in a row reminds me very much of a number of amusing and ingenious gentlemen whom I dare say some of you have seen and listened to. I mean the Christy Minstrels. The Christy Minstrels, if I am not misinformed, are, when they are clean-washed, white men; but they come before the audience as black as the blackest negroes, and by this transformation it is expected that their jokes and songs will be more amusing. The Derby minstrels pretend to be Liberal and white; but the fact is if you come nearer and examine them closely you will find them to be just as black and curly as the Tories have ever been. I do not know, and I will not pretend to say, which of them it is that plays the banjo and which the bones. But I have no doubt that, in their manœuvres to keep in office during the coming session, we shall know something more about them than we do at present; they are in point of fact, when they pretend to be Liberal, mere usurpers and impostors. Their party will not allow them to be Liberal, and they exist only upon the principle upon which they have acted in all their past history, of resisting and rejecting every proposition

of a Liberal character that has been submitted to them.

What is this Derby principle of shutting out more than five-sixths of all the people from the exercise of constitutional rights? If any of you take ship to Canada you will find the Derby principle utterly repudiated. But in Canada there is no uprooting of institutions, and no destruction of property, and there is no absence of order or of loyalty. If you go to Australia you will find there that the Derby principle is unknown, and yet there reigns order as in this country, and contentment with the institutions of the colonies, and a regard for law and property. If you go to those greatest and most glorious colonies of this country, the United States of America, there you find a people exhibiting all the virtues which belong to the greatest nations on the face of the earth; there you find a people passing through a great war and a great revolution with a conduct and success, with a generosity and a magnanimity which have attracted and aroused the admiration of the world. And if you go to Europe, you find in the Republic of Switzerland, in the kingdoms of Holland and Belgium, in Norway and Sweden, in France, and now you are about to witness it in Germany, a wide extension of the franchise, hitherto in this country, in our time, unknown; and neither emperor, king, nor noble believes that his authority or his interests, or the greatness or happiness of any one of those countries, will be jeopardised by the free admission of the people to constitutional rights. In Germany, the vote is to be given to every man of twenty-five years of age and upwards. Let them propose to do the same here, and then we shall not be in advance of the great State of North Germany which is now being established. But what is it we are coming to in this country? To this, that the thing which is being rapidly accepted in almost all parts of the world is being persistently and obstinately refused here in England, the home of freedom, the mother of parliaments. For in this England, five millions of grown men, representing more than twenty millions of our population, are to be permanently denied that which makes the only difference between despotism and freedom all the world over.

I venture to say that this cannot last very long. How do we stand at this moment? The noble and illustrious Lady who sits upon the throne—she whose gentle hand wields the sceptre over that wide empire of which we are the heart and centre—she was not afraid of the Franchise Bill which the Government introduced last session. Seven times, I think, by her own lips or by her pen she has recommended to Parliament the admission of a large number of working-men to the Parliamentary franchise. If this proposition was destructive, would not the Queen discover that fact? If the Bill of the last session had been a pernicious Bill, would the thirty millions of people of the United Kingdom not have been able to produce one single public meeting in condemnation of it? The middle class in our towns are by a vast majority in favour of it. All the middle class of Birmingham have sympathised with the great proceedings of this day, and I doubt not that by-and-by we shall see in the populous districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire assemblies rivalling those which have been held in London and Birmingham. And if we go to the House of Commons — that House elected so much by landlord compulsion in the counties, and by corruption, intimidation, and tumult in the boroughs, what do we find? Do not suppose that I am charging that House of Commons with faults that it does not itself understand and acknowledge:—have you read the report of the proceedings at the Commission for Yarmouth? Did you read that a late Member for that borough is said to have spent 70,000*l.* to maintain his seat? Did you read that one gentleman, an inferior partner in a brewery, contributed 4000*l.* for the election of his partner, and that another

gentleman, knowing nothing of that borough, went down there and supplied 6000*l*. to fight a contest spread only over a few days? And remember that when Yarmouth or any other borough is thus brought before the public it is only a sample of a very considerable sack—and that for every borough which is thus exposed there are probably ten or twenty other boroughs which are to a very large extent liable to the very same condemnation. Notwithstanding this, if we go to the House of Commons, we find the Parliament of England at this moment about equally divided, and that half the House was in favour of the late Bill. If that be so, what is wanted in this poising and balancing of the scale? It only wants this, that the working-men of England should heartily throw their influence into that side which is for their interests, and that side will prevail.

You know I have preferred that the franchise should be established upon what I consider to be the ancient practice of the country. I am not afraid of the principles of the Reform League. I have no fear of manhood suffrage, and no man is more a friend of the ballot than I am. It is a great cause which is offered to your notice to-night. It is a grand and noble flag under which you are asked to enlist yourselves. What I would recommend you to do is this—and I imagine myself at this moment to be speaking in the ear of every intelligent, sober, and thoughtful working-man in the three kingdoms—let us try to move on together; let us not split hairs on this question; let us do as our fathers did thirty-four years ago; let us have associations everywhere; let every workshop and factory be a Reform Association; let there be in every one of them a correspondent, or a secretary, who shall enrol members and assist this great and noble cause. I would recommend that the passages I have read from that celebrated and unhappy speech should be printed upon cards, and should be hung up in every room in every factory, workshop, and club-house, and in every place where working-men are accustomed to assemble. Let us rouse the spirit of the people against these slanderers of a great and noble nation.

There will soon come another election. The working-men may not be able to vote, but they can form themselves into a powerful body, and they can throw their influence in every borough on the side of the candidates who pledge themselves to the question of Reform. If they do this, you may depend upon it they will change many seats, and give a certain majority for Reform in the next Parliament. It may be necessary and desirable to meet Parliament again with petitions from all parts of the country, signed by numberless names. There is no effort which the Constitution, which morality permits us to use, that we should leave unused and unmade for the purpose of furthering this great cause; and let us be sure of this, that we demand only that the question of Reform shall be dealt with by a Government honestly in favour of Reform.

The Address which has been presented to me has referred to 1832. I remember that time well. My young heart then was stirred with the trumpet-blast that sounded from your midst. There was no part of this kingdom where your voice was not heard. Let it sound again. Stretch out your hands to your countrymen in every part of the three kingdoms, and ask them to join you in a great and righteous effort on behalf of that freedom which has been so long the boast of Englishmen, but which the majority of Englishmen have never yet possessed. I shall esteem it an honour which my words cannot describe, and which even in thought I cannot measure, if the population which I am permitted to represent should do its full duty in the great struggle which is before us. Remember the great object for which we strive. Care not for calumnies and lies. Our object is this—to restore the British Constitution in all its fulness, with all its freedom, to the British people.

REFORM.

IX.

GLASGOW, OCTOBER 16, 1866.

[On the 16th of October, 1866, a procession of many thousands of the friends of Reform passed through the streets of the city of Glasgow, and formed in a great meeting on Glasgow Green. The numbers present have been variously estimated, but it seemed as if nearly all the male population of the city were there. In the evening a great meeting was held in the City Hall, and Mr. Bright was presented with an Address, in answer to which this speech was spoken.]

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND CITIZENS OF NO MEAN CITY,—I accept this Address which has been read in your hearing and presented to me, with a feeling of deep gratitude to those who have expressed such friendly feelings towards me, but with a deep anxiety when I consider the intent and purport of the document. I am consoled by regarding it as in some degree a compact or covenant entered into to-night by you and those whom you represent, with me and those whom I may be supposed in some degree to represent, and that we covenant together that whatsoever is moral for us to do we engage to do in the prosecution of that great cause which has stirred the heart of Glasgow to-day. I can do but little—any one man can do but little; but you in your vast numbers can do much, by uniting with numbers, not smaller, in other parts of the kingdom.

I have a strong sense that the day is fast approaching which will see the triumph of our cause, and I think he must be blind and foolish indeed who is not willing to admit that it is a great issue which is now submitted to the people of the United Kingdom. Gatherings of scores of thousands of men, extending from south to north, must have some great cause. Men do not leave their daily labour, the necessary occupations of their lives, thus to meet, unless they believe that there is some great question submitted to them, in which they have a deep and overpowering interest. And the question is this—Whether in future the government and the legislation of this country shall be conducted by a privileged class in a sham Parliament, or on the principles of the constitution of the nation, through its representatives, fairly and freely chosen?

There are persons who will think that I am speaking harshly of the existing Parliament. Some probably in this meeting may think that Mr. Beales was indiscriminate in the term which he used when he spoke of our representation as being steeped in corruption; but I am certain that if the representa-

-tion of this country existed in any other country, and that its details were explained to Englishmen, there are not five Englishmen within the bounds of England, or five Britons within the bounds of this island, who would not admit that the language he has applied to the Parliament was correct.

What we charge against the Parliament is this—that it is chosen from constituencies not only so small that they do not and cannot adequately represent the nation, but from constituencies so small as to be influenced by corruption, and by all kinds of motives that are neither national nor patriotic. In our boroughs, for example, the numbers for the most part are very small. There are, I think, 254 boroughs in the United Kingdom, but there are only 54 of these that possess a constituency of 2,000 electors and upwards, large and fair constituencies being always the exception. In Scotland, your borough constituencies, though not generally very large, are larger than those in England, and to your honour it must be said that they are far more incorrupt than English constituencies. In the counties the freeholders—those who hold land for cultivation—are constantly diminishing in numbers, and that portion of the constituencies which is not composed of freeholders is composed of tenant-farmers—the most dependent class of occupiers, probably, in the nation.

But now, let me point to one or two facts which should sink deep in the minds of all men. Out of every hundred grown men in the United Kingdom eighty-four have no votes. Those eighty-four might just as well, for all purposes of constitutional government, so far as they are directly concerned—those eighty-four might as well live in Russia, where there is no electoral system of government, or in those other countries, now very few indeed, in which Parliaments and representations are unknown. If it be the fact that only sixteen men out of every hundred have votes, it is also the fact that those sixteen are so arranged, and so placed, that their representation is in reality almost entirely destroyed. If the electors were fairly divided amongst all the Members, there would be nearly 2,000 electors to every Member; but what is the state of things? It is this, that one-third of the House of Commons, or 220 Members, are actually elected by 70,000 votes—that is to say, that 220 Members of the House of Commons are chosen by a number of men scattered over the country, who are fewer by almost one-half than the number of grown men in this city of Glasgow alone. And further, one-half of the House of Commons is chosen by about 180,000 electors, being only one-seventh of the whole number of electors, and much below the number of men who are to be found in the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. And if we come to that great event which excites so much interest, but which is generally of so little value—a general election—we find, I believe, that not more than 10 in 100, not more than ten per cent. of the whole grown-up male population of the United Kingdom, ever come to the poll and give their vote for the election of a new Parliament.

With regard to a general election, some of you have read, and many of you know something of the cost and corruption of a general election. I will give you one instance and one proof of it. It has been my opinion all along that it was the duty of the Government of Lord Russell, after the defeat of their Reform Bill during the last session, to have dissolved the Parliament. I have no reason to disbelieve what is asserted, that Lord Russell himself was of that opinion. But a general election was a burden which the Members of Parliament did not wish to bear. I was speaking to a Member of the Government on this question about the time when the resignation of the late Government was just about to be submitted to the Queen, and I was telling him that I thought the true policy, the constitutional policy, of the Government was to dissolve the Parliament. A por-

tion of his answer was this:—A Member who sits on our side of the House had spoken to him about it. He said, 'My election has already cost me 9,000*l.*'—and he added, 'I have, besides, 3,000*l.* more to pay.' He said further, what was very reasonable, that this was a heavy burden, that it was grievous to be borne, that it put him to exceeding inconvenience, and, if the Parliament were dissolved, he could not afford to fight his county or his borough, as the case might be, but would be obliged to retire from the field, and leave the contest, if there should be a contest, to some one else. You will believe, then, that the Government were greatly pressed by this consideration; and this consideration, added, it may be, to others, induced them to resign office rather than to dissolve Parliament. Thus you have a proof that whereas general corruption and putridity are the destruction of most bodies which they affect, the corruption of the present Parliament was, and is, the cause of its present existence.

Now bear in mind that this state of things which I have been describing obtains at the present moment, thirty-four years after the passing of the great Reform Bill. What the Government must have been before that Bill was passed it is scarcely possible to describe or to imagine; but I have no doubt of this, that it was one of the worst Governments in civilized countries, and in Europe; and I think this may be fairly argued from the fact of the incessant wars in which the country was engaged *for 150 years before that Reform; from* the enormous debt that was created; from the crushing taxes that were fixed upon the people; and, worse almost than that, from that most infamous law which ever passed a Parliament of civilized men—the law which limited the supply of bread to the people.

Now, if the Clerk of the House of Commons were placed at Temple Bar, and if he had orders to tap upon the shoulder every well-dressed and apparently cleanly-washed man who passed through that ancient bar, until he had numbered six hundred and fifty-eight; and if the Crown summoned these six hundred and fifty-eight to be the Parliament of the United Kingdom, my honest conviction is that you would have a better Parliament than now exists. This assertion will stagger some timid and some good men; but let me explain myself to you. It would be a Parliament, every member of which would have no direct constituency, but it would be a Parliament that would act as a jury that would take some heed of the facts and arguments laid before it. It would be free, at any rate, from the class prejudices which weigh upon the present House of Commons. It would be free from the overshadowing presence of what are called noble families. It would owe no allegiance to great landowners, and I hope it would have fewer men amongst it seeking their own gains by entering Parliament.

With the Parliament which we have now and have had, facts and arguments go for very little. Take that question to which I have referred, of limiting the supply of bread to the people. The Corn-law was on the Statute-book for thirty-one years—sixteen years before the Reform Bill, and fifteen years after the passing of that Bill—but from the first hour of its enactment until the hour of its destruction the facts and the arguments against it were equally clear and equally conclusive. They would not be convinced though one arose from the dead, and that which convinced them at last was the occurrence of a great famine in Ireland, which destroyed or drove from the country hundreds of thousands of the citizens of the empire. I maintain with the most perfect conviction that the House of Commons, representing as it now does counties and boroughs such as I have described, does not represent the intelligence and the justice of the nation, but the prejudices, the privileges, and the selfishness of a class.

What are the results of this system of legislation? Some of them have been

touched upon in that Address which has been so kindly presented to me. You refer to the laws affecting land. Are you aware of a fact which I saw stated the other day in an essay on this subject—that half the land of England is in the possession of fewer than one hundred and fifty men? Are you aware of the fact that half the land in Scotland is in the possession of not more than ten or twelve men? Are you aware of the fact that the monopoly in land in the United Kingdom is growing constantly more and more close? And the result of it is this—the gradual extirpation of the middle-class as owners of land, and the constant degradation of the tillers of the soil. Take a matter about which many Scotch farmers know something—take the perpetual grievance of the Game-laws. In the House of Commons that question can scarcely be discussed. The landed interest, as it did in the late cattle-plague debate, tramples down Government and borough Members and everybody and everything that thwarts its inclination. Take the general—I am sorry to say the too general—subserviency of the tenant-farmers in the matter of elections in your country—in Scotland. I entertain the hope that you will lead the way to the deliverance of the farmers from this slavery. In the last elections for Kincardineshire and for Aberdeenshire, the tenant-farmers have taken the politics of those counties into their own hands. I hope, and I believe, that the tenant-farmers of Scotland—the most enlightened agriculturists that live on the face of the earth—I hope they, with perfect justice, and perfect courtesy to their landowners, will still exert their legitimate and right influence in the election of Members for the counties of Scotland.

But take—what some of you cannot comprehend—take the helpless poverty of the farm-labourers in the southern counties of England. Their wages are very low. Their helplessness is extreme. Their power to deliver themselves, their power to combine, seems at the lowest ebb. Look at their ignorance! A friend of mine—a Member of the House of Commons, who lives within six miles of the royal town and castle of Windsor, told me only the other day that he knew the case of a family near his house in which there had grown up eleven children, not one of whom could read or write at all. And he said that he had lately had in his employ upon his property seven men, of whom four could neither read nor write, two of them could read most imperfectly, and one of them could read and write about as well as the other two could read. Bear in mind that all this exists within six miles of the royal castle of Windsor. It exists in a neighbourhood where lords and squires and established clergymen swarm. Such is the state of ignorance of that population at this moment. In the county from which I come, girls of the age of from fifteen to twenty years are earning, many of them, I believe, double the weekly wages of the able-bodied farm-labourer, the head and father of a family, in some of the south-western counties of England. But what must be the ignorance of that population, that when such wages are offering to them in Lancashire and Yorkshire they scarcely hear of them! They seem to have no aspiration to better their condition, and there is no sensible emigration from these wretched counties to the more prosperous counties of the north.

Your Address refers to pauperism—the gulf of pauperism. In the United Kingdom at this moment there are more than 1,200,000 paupers. The pauperism of the United Kingdom last year—and it will not cost less, I believe, this year—cost the rate-payers—those who pay taxes for the relief of the poor—more than seven and a half millions sterling, and this does not include the cost of many thousands of vagrants who also come occasionally under the name of paupers. Now look, I beg of you, to this mass of misery. It is so great a mass that benevolence

cannot reach it. If benevolence could do it, there would be no pauperism in England, for in no country do I believe that there is more benevolence than there is in the United Kingdom. The kindness of the women of England is beyond all measure and beyond all praise of mine. There does not exist among created beings, beneath the angelic ranks, those who are more kind and charitable than the women of the United Kingdom. But benevolence can touch scarcely the fringe of this vast disorder. There is another virtue we could add, and that virtue and that quality is justice. It is not benevolence but justice that can deal with giant evils. It was not benevolence that gave the people bread twenty years ago, but it was justice embodied in the abolition of a cruel and a guilty law. But justice is impossible from a class. It is most certain and easy from a nation; and I believe we can only reach the depths of ignorance and misery and crime in this country by an appeal to the justice, the intelligence, and the virtues of the entire people.

That Address has mentioned another question—the question of your national expenditure, of your army and navy; and I will state only one fact with regard to the navy. I believe since the great war, since 1815, that the navy of this country has cost more than four hundred millions sterling. I believe that during the last six years it has cost as much as the United States navy during the same time: we have been in a condition of profound peace; the United States have had to build or buy six hundred ships, to man them, to furnish them with munitions of war, and to fight them during the greatest struggle that any nation ever waged. And yet at this moment, after spending so much, we have Sir John Pakington, the great reconstructor, coming into office, and promising, not to extend the liberties of the people, but to reconstruct a navy on which such enormous and countless sums have already been sunk.

Then, take the taxes. Something has been done to make the taxes more equal; but take the taxes which are levied under the name of probate and legacy and succession duties; and I will give you a case which it is just possible you have heard before from my lips. A Member of the House of Commons—at least he was so when he gave me this fact, though I am sorry to say he is not one now—a Member of the House of Commons told me he had had left to him by a person not related to him by blood an estate in land worth 21,000*l.*; the timber upon it was worth 11,000*l.*; altogether 32,000*l.* The tax, when the property is left to a person who is not a relation of the man who leaves it, is ten per cent.; the tax therefore on 32,000*l.* would be 3,200*l.*; and if any one of you received a legacy like that in cash, in shares, in ships, in stock-in-trade, in any of those things which are not lands and houses, he would pay 3,200*l.* But my friend receiving his legacy in land, and the timber upon it, paid just 700*l.* And why? For this reason only, that the law was made by a landed and propertied Parliament, and the owners and inheritors of lands and houses were considered specially worthy of its regard.

But I may be asked—and no doubt some man who, after this meeting, will take up his pen to write a criticism on my speech, or upon this meeting, will ask—how comes it, if Parliament is so bad, that so many good things have been done by Parliament during the last thirty or forty years? I acknowledge that good things have been done, and I ought to know, because I have been concerned in the doing of some of them. But by whom were they done? Mainly by that force in Parliament which is sent there by the great and free borough constituencies of the kingdom. The Members for the great towns—although but a minority, and not a very large minority—are the moving force by which these good things have been done. It has not been the policy of the Tories to do good things—and I have seen the time

when the Whigs have been much less zealous about them than I could have wished. They have sprung from the people, and the people have carried them. What there has been of real representation in Parliament has urged these measures forward. What there has been of sham representation has uniformly opposed these measures.

I am of opinion that the rich people of a country, invested with power, and speaking generally for rich people alone, cannot sufficiently care for the multitude and the poor. They are personally kind enough, but they do not care for the people in the bulk. They have read a passage in Holy Writ that 'The poor ye have always with you'—and therefore they imagine that it is a providential arrangement that a small section of the people should be rich and powerful, and that the great mass of the people should be hardworking and poor. It is a long distance from castles, and mansions, and great houses, and abounding luxuries, to the condition of the great mass of the people who have no property, and too many of whom are always on the verge of poverty. We know very well all of us how much we are influenced by the immediate circumstances by which we are surrounded. The rich find everything just as they like. The country needs no reform. There is no other country in the world so pleasant for rich people as this country. But I deny altogether that the rich alone are qualified to legislate for the poor, any more than that the poor alone would be qualified to legislate for the rich. My honest belief is, that if we could be all called upon to legislate for all, that all would be more justly treated, and would be more happy than we are now. We should have then an average; we should have the influence of wealth and of high culture, and of those qualities that come from leisure, and the influence of those more robust qualities that come from industry and from labour.

Suppose now, without arguing for this or that particular measure of Reform, that we could add another million to the existing constituencies, what would be the result? We should modify the constituencies. Instead of the people coming to the hustings at the nomination and holding up their hands for this candidate or that, and having for the most part no power in the election, the inhabitants of the town would have a much greater power than they have now. The constituency would be less open to management than it is at present; majorities on one side or the other would be larger and less open to corruption; and we should have Members whose opinions and whose conduct would be modified by this infusion of new and fresh blood into the constituencies which send them to Parliament. We should do this further—we should bring the rich and the great more into contact with the people, and into a better acquaintance with human wants and with the necessities and feelings of their countrymen. What other thing would happen? I dare venture to assert this, that Parliament then would not revile and slander the people as it does now. Nor would it cheer with frantic violence when their countrymen are described in hideous and hateful colours. Probably what I call the Botany Bay view of their countrymen would be got rid of, and we should have a sense of greater justice and generosity in the feeling with which they regard the bulk of the nation. And if there was more knowledge of the people, there would assuredly be more sympathy with them; and I believe the legislation of the House, being more in accordance with the public sentiment, would be wiser and better in every respect. The nation would be changed. There would be amongst us a greater growth of everything that is good.

May I ask if there are any ministers of religion in this audience? I have sometimes thought that I should like to have an audience of four or five thousand of them, to whom I could preach a political sermon, and to whom I could tell something which I fear their theo-

logical schools have failed to teach them. An eminent man of your country, the late Dr. Chalmers, in speaking of the question of free-trade, and particularly of the struggle for the abolition of the Corn-laws, uttered some memorable words. He said he thought there was nothing that would tend so much to sweeten the breath of British society as the abolition of the Corn-laws. I believe now that there is nothing which would tend so much to sweeten the breath of British society as the admission of a large and generous number of the working-classes to citizenship and the exercise of the franchise. Now, if my words should reach the ears and reach the heart of any man who is interested in the advancement of religion in this country, I ask him to consider whether there are not great political obstacles to the extension of civilization and morality and religion within the bounds of the United Kingdom. We believe—these ministers, you, and I—we believe in a Supreme Ruler of the Universe. We believe in His omnipotence; we believe and we humbly trust in His mercy. We know that the strongest argument which is used against that belief, by those who reject it, is an argument drawn from the misery, and the helplessness, and the darkness of so many of our race, even in countries which call themselves civilized and Christian. Is not that the fact? If I believed that this misery, and this helplessness, and this darkness could not be touched or transformed, I myself should be driven to admit the almost overwhelming force of that argument; but I am convinced that just laws, and an enlightened administration of them, would change the face of the country. I believe that ignorance and suffering might be lessened to an incalculable extent, and that many an Eden, beauteous in flowers and rich in fruits, might be raised up in the waste wilderness which spreads before us. But no class can do that. The class which has hitherto ruled in this country has failed miserably. It revels in power and wealth, whilst at its feet, a terrible peril for its future, lies the multitude which it has neglected. If a class has failed, let us try the nation. That is our faith, that is our purpose, that is our cry—Let us try the nation. This it is which has called together these countless numbers of the people to demand a change; and, as I think of it, and of these gatherings, sublime in their vastness and in their resolution, I think I see, as it were, above the hill-tops of time, the glimmerings of the dawn of a better and a nobler day for the country and for the people that I love so well.

REFORM.

X.

MANCHESTER, NOVEMBER 20, 1866.

[The following speech was made in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, at a Banquet organized by the National Reform Union. Several Members of the Liberal Party were invited to the gathering.]

Although, perhaps, this is one of the most striking and important meetings which have been held in this country during the last few years, you will, perhaps, be surprised to learn that I came to it with a sense almost of indifference: not indifference as to its importance; but with an absence of that feeling of responsibility which has pressed so much upon me on some recent occasions. For the committee were kind enough to send round to their guests a list of the speakers who were expected to address the meeting. I found them much more numerous than is common, and I found my name about half way down the list. I took it, therefore, for granted that I could come, for once, in some degree as a spectator and a listener, rather than as a prominent actor at the meeting. Some gentlemen who were expected to be here are not here—Mr. Stansfeld, because he is ill; Mr. Layard, because he has not returned from the Continent. And Mr. Forster, who seems less able to occupy the time of an audience when he comes into Lancashire than he is in Yorkshire, has spoken, I may say, uttering the feeling of the whole meeting, for a very much shorter time than we had a right to expect. I shall trust, therefore, to those who come after me to say a good deal which I shall not take up your time in attempting to say to-night.

During the last memorable session of Parliament you will probably recollect that it was a very common thing in the mouths of the opponents of the Government Bill to say that the working-men—the aggrieved party—felt no grievance; for they scarcely expressed any favourable opinion on the Bill, or, indeed, any opinion at all on the question of their own admission to the franchise. I was repeatedly charged with being in the position of a leader in a case, in which it was said that, after all, I had no clients and no following. There was a general taunt uttered that we were very much exaggerating the case of the working-men, and that the condition of that large class was so comfortable and so prosperous that they were perfectly content with the Government as it is carried on by a Parliament so inadequately representing the whole nation.

where alone it exists in any life at all, is a representative system almost wholly delusive, and defrauds the middle classes of the power which the Act of 1832 professed to give them.

Your county representation is almost too sad a subject to dwell upon. Every man who occupies a house or land of an annual value less than 50*l.* is excluded: the number of freeholders on the whole diminishes, and really there remains scarcely anything of independent power and freedom of election within the majority of the counties of the United Kingdom. So, then, I come to this conclusion, that the working classes are excluded and insulted, and that the middle classes are defrauded; and I presume that those who really do wield the power despise the middle classes for their silence under this system. When I look at the great middle class of this country, and see all that it has done, and see the political position in which it has been to some extent content to rest, I cannot help saying that it reminds me very much of the language which the ancient Hebrew patriarch addressed to one of his sons. He said, 'Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens.' On the one side there is the burden of seven and a half millions per annum, raised by way of tax, to keep from starvation more than 1,200,000 paupers within the United Kingdom—and on the other hand, and higher up in the scale, there is mismanagement the most gross, there is extravagance the most reckless, and there is waste the most appalling and disgraceful which has ever been seen in the government of any country. And this is the grand result of a system which systematically shuts out the millions, and which cajoles the middle class by the hocus-pocus of a Parliamentary Government.

Sir, I am delighted beyond measure, after many years of discussion, of contemplation, of labour—in connection with this great question—I say I am delighted to believe that the great body of the people, call them middle class or call them working class, are resolved that this state of things shall exist no longer. During the last session of Parliament there has been an honest attempt made by an honest Government to tinker the existing system. For, after all, the Bill of the last session, honest and well intended and valuable as it was, was still but a tinkering of a very bad system. But the Tory party refused even to have it tinkered. They remind me of a wealthy but a most penurious old gentleman, who lived some years ago in my neighbourhood, and who objected very much to a tailor's bill; he said that he had found out that a hole would last longer than a patch. I am not sure that this is not the case with Lord Derby and his friends; for it was one of their great arguments that if the Bill of the Government passed it would inevitably follow that something more would almost immediately be demanded. They were so anxious that things should remain as they are that they refused to admit 200,000 more of the middle class by the lowering of the county franchise, and they refused with equal, perhaps with greater pertinacity, to admit 200,000, but, as I believe, not much more than 100,000 working-men, to electoral rights.

They would not suppress nor allow the suppression of one single rotten borough, and in fact there was no abuse, however foul, however intolerable, however putrid, to which they would allow the legislative reforming knife to be applied; and they determined to keep everything just as it is. And now these gentlemen, with whom we were obliged, to our great misfortune, to contend so much last session, are in office. They call themselves Her Majesty's servants; but they have not yet dared to proclaim that they are the executive servants of the people. Some of their papers, and some papers which are not theirs, give us to understand—for the papers are often understanding a great many things of which they know nothing—that the Cabinet meetings held during the last

fortnight have landed us in this strange position, — that the men who were against all Reform six months ago, are now warmly engaged in concocting a measure which shall be satisfactory to the great body of the Reformers of this country.

My opinion is this:—first of all, that the papers know nothing about it; secondly, that the Government (we are obliged to call them a Government) has not made up its mind at all whether it will bring in a Reform Bill or not. In point of fact, Lord Derby is waiting to see what the weather will be. And I suppose they will postpone their decision perhaps for some few weeks to come. Who knows but that they will wait till this day fortnight—or yesterday fortnight?

Yesterday fortnight, on Monday, the 3rd of December, it is said that, following the example of Birmingham, and the West Riding, and Glasgow, and Manchester, and Edinburgh, the men concerned in the trades in London will make what they call a demonstration, that is, that on behalf of the question of Reform they will assemble and will peacefully walk through some of the main streets of the West End of London, for the purpose of showing that they take an interest in this great question. I know nothing of the arrangements, except what I see in the papers; but it is said that more than 200,000 men have arranged to walk in that procession. I hear on no mean authority that certain persons at the West End are getting up a little alarm at what may happen on the 3rd of December.

What will happen we all know. If the police do not interfere to break the peace, the peace will not be broken. And, probably, what happened on the last occasion may be of some use in teaching the Home Secretary his duty on this occasion. There are persons, doubtless, so credulous and so willing to wish well of everybody, as to imagine that Lord Derby's Government will bring in a satisfactory Reform Bill. They say that Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington carried Catholic Emancipation; that Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington repealed the Corn-law; and why should not Lord Derby pass a Reform Bill? Lord Derby is neither the Duke of Wellington nor Sir Robert Peel. He deserted both those eminent men in 1846, rather than unite with them to repeal the Corn-law; and he has never shown, from that hour to this, one atom of statesmanship or one spark of patriotism that would lead us to expect that, on this occasion, he would turn round, and, neglecting his party, do something for his country.

It is all very well to say that if the Government bring in a very good Bill, we who want a very good Bill, will support it. But it is no use dealing in phraseology and platitudes of that kind. Look at the Cabinet of Lord Derby; look what the members of it have said and done during late years, and during the late Parliamentary session. Lord Derby has told us that it was his mission to stem democracy; his friends in the House of Commons declared last session that the passing of that Bill of the late Government would be to hand over the country to the democracy of the working classes. Mr. Disraeli, in his speeches, was ingenious beyond his fellows, as indeed he generally is, for if he had not been so, he would not have reached the position in which we find him. But Mr. Disraeli was anxious to cut off all free election in counties. He is of opinion, so far as I gather from his speeches, that the more entirely the county representation can be made conterminous with the great estates of the peers and the great landowners, the more entirely it will be after his own fashion and his own wishes. No more perilous idea can be entertained by any statesman; if you once get the nominees of the great landowners and the lords on the one side of the House, and the representatives of everybody else on the other side of the House, the beginning of the end will have come. And whilst Mr. Disraeli is tickling the ears and the fancy of the country gentlemen behind

him, he is propounding a plan which, if it were carried into effect, would end in the utter extinction of the political power of the country gentlemen and the peerage of England.

Mr. Disraeli and Lord Stanley were the men in the last Derby Government who proposed to disfranchise 70,000 county voters whose property was within the limits of the boroughs, and I cannot believe that men who made such a proposition seven or eight years ago can produce a good honest Reform Bill now. Lord Stanley made a speech during the discussions on the late Bill which his party and their press said was unanswerable. It was a speech leading to this conclusion, that he would give no votes to any of the working class until he saw, by the distribution of seats, that those votes could be made of no use to them. And Lord Stanley lent himself to an unhappy trick, intended, as it appeared to us, to take the Government and the House by surprise, and by which, by gaining a sudden and accidental division, he might have destroyed both the Bill and the Government. Lord Cranborne is a member of this Cabinet—Lord Robert Cecil that was a short time ago. Lord Cranborne quarrelled violently with Mr. Gladstone because Mr. Gladstone said the working-men were of our own flesh and blood. He treated that observation very much in the same way that the Carolinian planter and slaveholder in the Senate of the United States would have replied to my friend Mr. Sumner if he had said that the black and white were equal in the eye of God, and of one flesh and blood. General Peel is a member of this Government, and he protested violently against any reduction of the franchise, as indeed did Sir Stafford Northcote, who is, I think, now the President of the Board of Trade.

I want to ask you whether from these men you are to expect, you are to wait for, with anxious and hopeful looking forward, any Reform Bill? And, after all these speeches had been made, Lord Derby did his utmost to prevail upon Mr. Lowe to become a member of his Cabinet. If, after all this, they were to attempt to manufacture and introduce a Reform Bill, they would cover themselves and their party with humiliation. I know that in this country politicians change sides; office has a wonderful effect upon men. I suppose there are men here such as were described by our witty friend, Mr. Hosea Bigelow, in painting the character of some politicians in America. He said of them as we perhaps may say of Lord Derby and his party,—

> 'A merciful Providence fashioned them hollow,
> On purpose that they might their principles swallow.'

But, notwithstanding that provision, that merciful provision, for statesmen, I confess that I do not believe that the Government have determined to bring in a Reform Bill, or that they can by any possibility bring in a Bill which the Reformers of this country can accept. They have done everything during the past session by fraudulent statements—by insults to the people—by the most evident baseness of party action—to destroy the moderate and honest attempt of Lord Russell to improve the representation. And I do not believe that in one short year they can turn round; and, capacious as may be the internal cavity of the Tory Government, I think they cannot in one short year swallow all their Conservative principles.

If a man were to tell me that he had a broth composed of half-a-dozen poisonous ingredients, and that he could make of it a wholesome dish, I should not believe him. And if he tells me that Derby, and Disraeli, and Stanley, and Cranborne, and General Peel, and the rest of them, after the speeches to which I listened six months ago, are about to produce a wholesome, and salutary, and liberal Reform Bill, I must ask him not to impose for a moment on my understanding. The

enemies of the Bill of 1866 cannot become the honest friends of Reform in 1867—and the conspirators of the session which has just expired cannot become honourable statesmen in the session which is about to open. My opinion may be no better than that of any other man. This, however, may be good advice—that all Reformers should be on the watch, for there are enemies enough to our cause, and false friends enough to convince us that it is by no means out of danger.

But the next Bill—what must it be? One thing I think we have a right to insist upon, that the next Bill which is introduced by a Liberal and Reform Government shall be in its suffrage based upon the ancient borough franchise of the country. Household or rating suffrage has existed for centuries in our parishes. It has existed for many years in our municipal corporations. It has never been found either in parish or corporation to be destructive of the interests of the people of those circumscribed districts of the country. I say, therefore, that we ought to stand by the ancient Constitution of England. I believe Lord Russell, speaking of him in his private capacity, would be in favour of extending the borough franchise, at least to the limits of the municipal franchise. There is reason to believe that Mr. Gladstone himself would approve of such a measure. We know that the late Attorney-General, one of the most eminent lawyers and one of the most accomplished Members of the House of Commons, publicly and openly expressed himself in favour of that change. I believe the middle class, as a rule, the Liberal portion of the middle class, would have no objection to see the franchise extended to all householders in boroughs.

I believe that, if it were so extended, we should arrive at a point at which, so long as any of us are permitted to meddle with the politics of our country, no further change would be demanded. I therefore am entirely in favour of it, because I believe it to be wise in itself, and because it is the ancient borough franchise of this kingdom. I am in accord with our ancient Constitution. I would stand by it; wherever it afforded support for freedom I would march in its track. That track is so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. I would be guided by its lights. They have been kept burning by great men among our forefathers for many generations. Our only safety in this warfare is in adhering to the ancient and noble Constitution of our country. And when we have restored it to its bygone strength, and invited the great body of the people to take part in political power, then the House of Commons will be the servant of the nation and not its master, and it will do the bidding, not of a small, a limited, often an ignorant, necessarily a selfish class, but the bidding of a great and noble people.

there any man in England who would like to see the working-men of Great Britain driven to any such course in defence or in maintenance of their rights? Well, I hold, then, that all men in this country, whatever be their abstract opinions on this question of a wide extension of the suffrage, should really rejoice at the noble exhibition, the orderly and grand exhibition of opinion which has been made by the working-men of England and Scotland during the past three months.

I said that if there be a grievance—a deep-seated sentiment that there is a grievance—there must necessarily be a voice to express and to proclaim it. What is the grievance of which you complain? You are the citizens, the native inhabitants of a country which is called constitutional; and what is meant by that is that your government is not the despotic government of a monarch, nor the oligarchical government of an oligarchy; but that it is a government, a large and essential portion of which is conducted by honestly-elected representatives of the people; and the grievance is this—that this constitution, so noble in its outline and so noble in its purpose, is defaced and deformed, and that when you look at it it seems in this respect absolutely worse than any other representative constitution existing in the world. For I believe there is no representation whatsoever at this moment in America or in Europe that is so entirely deformed from its natural, just, and beautiful proportions, as is the representative system of this country. What can be more clear than this—that the aristocracy of land and of wealth usurp the power in both Houses of Parliament? The Lords represent themselves, and generally the great landowners, with great fidelity. But, at the same time, we must admit and deplore that at least one-half of the House of Commons is in fast alliance with the majority of the House of Lords.

Now, I have said before—I repeat it again—that there is no security whatsoever for liberty under any government unless there be an essential power in a fair representation of the nation. An illustrious man, the founder of the great province, and now the great State of Pennsylvania—William Penn—in the preface to his Constitution for that province—a Constitution of the widest and most generous freedom—uses these words:—'Any government is free to the people under it, whatever be the frame, where the laws rule, and the people are a party to the laws; and more than this is tyranny, oligarchy, or confusion.' Now, let us ask ourselves, can it be fairly said, can it be said without the most direct falsehood, that the people of this country, through the House of Commons, are *really* a party to the laws that are made? It is not at all disputed that only sixteen out of every hundred men are now on the electoral rolls, and are able, all other circumstances favouring, to give their vote at a general election; and it is not disputed that half the House of Commons—that an absolute majority of that House—is elected by a number of electors not exceeding altogether three men out of every hundred in the United Kingdom.

I have taken the trouble to make a little calculation from the facts contained in a very useful book, published by a very old friend of mine, Mr. Acland, called the 'Imperial Poll-Book,' from which a great amount of valuable information may be had upon this question. I have taken out the number of votes given at the last contested election that has been held for every borough and county in the United Kingdom since the passing of the Reform Bill, and I find that there being, so far as I know, at least one contest in every place since that time, the whole number of votes given at the contest in every borough and county is short of the number of 900,000, which is about one in eight of the men in the country; and if you deduct from that number the double votes, that is the men who vote for more than one county, or who vote for a county and a borough, in all proba-

bility there would not be registered more than 800,000 votes at a general election in the United Kingdom where there was a contest in every county and in every borough. But I take the election of 1859, which is the last the particulars of which are given in the 'Imperial Poll-Book,' and I find there that the whole number of votes registered, so far as I could make them out, at the general election of 1859, was under 370,000. Now, deduct the double votes from this, and probably there would not be at that general election, or at the general election of last year, more than 300,000 or 320,000 men who recorded their votes. Some other allowances must be made. There are boroughs, and there may be counties, in which the opinion falls so much on one side that there could be no chance of a contest. For example, in the borough which I am permitted to represent there would be no contest, and therefore that borough would not supply any figures to those figures which I am quoting. But there are many boroughs, as we all know, in which there is no contest; in some boroughs there is no contest because there is no freedom of election. And there are many counties in which there is no contest because there is no freedom of election in those counties. But I quote these numbers to show to you that when the Queen orders through her Ministers what is generally called an appeal to the country, it is at the very utmost an appeal to 800,000 electors, and in all probability the appeal is answered by registered voters numbering from 300,000 to 400,000.

After this, then, I undertake to say that the people are not, in the sense of our Constitution, a party to the laws, and that the government of the United Kingdom, in the sense indicated in the quotation that I have made from William Penn's preface to his Constitution, is not free to this people. And let me tell you, what doubtless many men have not thought of, that there is no form of government much worse than the government of a sham representation. A Parliament like our Parliament has Members enough, and just enough of the semblance of representation, to make it safe for it to do almost anything it likes against the true interests of the nation. There is nothing so safe as a Parliament like this for the commission of what is evil. There is not representation enough to make it truly responsible to the intelligence, and the virtue, and the opinions of the nation.

Take a case which is in the recollection of all of us. Is there any man in the world who believes for a moment that any monarch that ever sat on the English throne would have dared in 1815 to have passed the Corn-law—to have brought into action in this city of London, horse, foot, and artillery—to have surrounded his own palace—and to have beaten off the people who were protesting against the enactment of that law? But the Parliament of England did that, and a Parliament of landowners, for the express and only purpose of increasing their own rents by the sacrifice of the comfort, the plenty, the health, and the life of the great body of the people.

But to come only to the last session of Parliament. We will not go back to the time before the Reform Act. We will only go to the last session of Parliament. Look at their responsibility then, and their sense of responsibility. Look at the moderation of that Bill which was brought in by the late Government. Was it possible to have proposed a more moderate measure than that of the late Government? Well, but what happened? A Parliament of landowners and of rich men, who have wholly despised that great national opinion which has been exhibited during the last three or four months, resisted that measure with a pertinacity never exceeded, and with an amount of intrigue, and I say of unfairness to the Government, which they durst not for one single night have attempted if they had felt any real responsibility to the people of this country. And now they

resist up to this moment, and for aught I know may resist when they meet at the beginning of February next, and they may possibly resist until the discontent which is now so general shall become universal, and that which is now only a great exhibition of opinion may become necessarily and inevitably a great and menacing exhibition of force.

These opponents of ours, many of them in Parliament openly, and many of them secretly in the press, have charged us with being the promoters of a dangerous excitement. They say we are the source of the danger which threatens; they have absolutely the effrontery to charge me with being the friend of public disorder. I am one of the people. Surely, if there be one thing in a free country more clear than another, it is that any one of the people may speak openly to the people. If I speak to the people of their rights, and indicate to them the way to secure them—if I speak of their danger to the monopolists of power—am I not a wise counsellor, both to the people and to their rulers? Suppose I stood at the foot of Vesuvius or Etna, and, seeing a hamlet or a homestead planted on its slope, I said to the dwellers in that hamlet or in that homestead, You see that vapour which ascends from the summit of the mountain. That vapour may become a dense, black smoke that will obscure the sky. You see that trickling of lava from the crevices or fissures in the side of the mountain. That trickling of lava may become a river of fire. You hear that muttering in the bowels of the mountain. That muttering may become a bellowing thunder, the voice of a violent convulsion that may shake half a continent. You know that at your feet is the grave of great cities for which there is no resurrection, as history tells us that dynasties and aristocracies have passed away and their name has been known no more for ever. If I say this to the dwellers upon the slope of the mountain, and if there comes hereafter a catastrophe which makes the world to shudder, am I responsible for that catastrophe? I did not build the mountain, or fill it with explosive materials. I merely warned the men that were in danger.

So, now, it is not I who am stimulating men to the violent pursuit of their acknowledged constitutional rights. We are merely about our lawful business—and you are the citizens of a country that calls itself free, yet you are citizens to whom is denied the greatest and the first blessing of the constitution under which you live. If the truth must be told, the Tory party is the turbulent party of this nation. I left the last session of Parliament just about the time when the present Ministers, successful in their intrigues, acceded to office—I left the Parliament with a feeling of sadness, of disgust, and of apprehension. I said to myself, I may as well judge of the future by the past. The Parliament of England will not do justice to the people until there happens something that will suddenly open their eyes. I remember what took place in the year 1829 when the Duke of Wellington said: 'Either give political power and representation through Catholic Members to the Catholics of the United Kingdom, or encounter the peril and loss of civil war in Ireland.' Up to that moment Parliament had refused to do it. Then Parliament consented and the thing was done. In 1832 you were within twenty-four hours of revolution in this country. This great class which sits omnipotent in one House, and hardly less so in the other, might then, and probably would have been extinguished, and what there would have been left except the people it is difficult to imagine.

In 1846, although every intelligent man in every country throughout the world admitted the justice and force of our arguments against the Corn-law, it still required the occurrence of a crushing and desolating famine in Ireland—a famine which destroyed as many lives in that country as would have been

destroyed by a great war, and which drove into exile as many of the people of that island as would have been driven into exile by the most cruel and relentless conquest—it required all that before the Parliament of England, the men amongst whom I sit, and whose faces are as familiar to me as those of any person whom I know in life—I say that it required all that before Parliament would consent to give up that intolerable wrong of taxing the bread of an industrious people. Now, suppose that the Bill which was brought into the House last session as a Franchise Bill only—which was done, as was admitted by Lord Russell, in adoption of advice which I had publicly given to the Government, and which advice I believe was eminently sound, and ought to be followed whenever this question is dealt with again by a Liberal and honest Government — I say, suppose that that Bill, instead of being met with every kind of unfair and ungenerous opposition, had been wisely accepted by the House of Commons and become law, what would have been the state of the country during the present autumn and winter? It would have been one of rejoicing and congratulation everywhere; not because the Bill included everybody and satisfied everybody, but all working-men would have felt that the barrier created at the Reform Bill, if not absolutely broken down, was at least so much lowered that the exclusion was much less general and less offensive. You would have had this result, that we, the people in these islands, would have been no longer two nations. We should have felt more—that henceforth we are one people. Every element of strength in the country would have been immeasurably strengthened, and there would have been given even to the humblest of the unenfranchised a feeling of hope which would have led him to believe in, and to strive after, something higher and better than that to which he had hitherto been able to attain.

Now, who prevented this? Surely we did not prevent it. We who thought we were speaking for the general good of the people, we accepted the measure with an honourable sincerity and fidelity. We said that it is good to the point to which it steps forward. It is perfectly honest; it is no trick or subterfuge. It will give satisfaction to some hundreds of thousands, and it will give that which is as great a boon—it will give hope to millions whom it does not include—and therefore, in perfect honourableness, we accepted that measure. And who opposed it? None other could effectually oppose it than Lord Derby and the party of which he is the acknowledged and trusted leader. They and he opposed and rejected that Bill, and they and he are responsible for what has been done since in the country as a necessary and inevitable consequence of that rejection. Lord Derby now stands nearest to the Throne, and I venture to say that he is not a strength but a weakness to that Throne. By his conduct — and by the conduct of his party, which he adopts—he thwarted at once the benevolent intentions of the Crown and the just expectations of the people.

I confess that I am astonished at the conduct of the Tory party in this matter. When the Bill was introduced into the House of Commons, it appeared to me to be the very last that any statesman with a spark of sense or honesty could offer any opposition to, and I did not believe that on the other side of the House there was, I will say, if you like, bitter partisanship or stupidity enough to induce them to fight a combined battle with all who would join them for the purpose of rejecting that Bill. One would suppose that the present Government had troubles enough on hand in what is called the sister country without urging the people to excitement here. Ireland, as I have described it before Irishmen, is the favoured field on which all the policy of the Tory party has been exhibited, displayed, and tried. In Ireland the Habeas Corpus Act is suspended. In-

dividual liberty, except by consent of the Executive, is abolished; troops are pouring into the country; iron-clads, it is said, are ordered to the coast to meet some, I hope and believe, imaginary foe; and the country gentlemen and their families are reported to be fleeing from their ancestral homes to find refuge in garrison towns; and all this is the magnificent result of the policy of that party whose head and hope is Lord Derby. And even now, up to this very last session of Parliament, that party has had no remedy for this state of things but that ancient, and rude, and savage remedy, the remedy of military force. But with all this in Ireland, greatly exaggerated, as I hope and believe, by some public writers, yet still with enough to cause pain and anxiety, was it a judicious course for the present party in power to create a great excitement in Great Britain? I say that Lord Derby, as the representative of his party in Parliament, is himself the fomentor of discord, and that his party, and not our party, is at this moment the turbulent element in English political society.

And let me tell this party—I tell them nothing from this platform that I have not told them upon the floor of the House of Commons—let me tell them that this question will not sleep. Some months ago there was a remarkable convention held in Switzerland composed of men of eminence and character, by which an address or memorial was prepared and forwarded to the Government of the United States, congratulating them upon the close of their gigantic struggle, and upon the establishment of universal freedom throughout the wide bounds of the republic. There was a ...age in that memorial, an expression vulsio... philosophy and true statesman- You kn... this effect: 'Unfinished ques- of great...e no pity for the repose of resurrect... That referred to the great dynasties ... negro slavery; but it is just away and ...n it is applied to the ques- no more for ... where from five to six dwellers upon th... men in this United tain, and if there ...onstitutional Government and with a representative system, are shut out directly and purposely from that Constitution and Representation. This great question which we are debating to-night is an unfinished question, and, as the Swiss express it, it will have no pity for the repose of this nation until it is a finished question.

I observed to-day, in a newspaper considered by some to be of great authority, that the working-men are supposed by what are called our betters—for that paper only writes for our betters—they are supposed to have now done enough, and they are exhorted—by the very hand, probably, which during the whole of the last session of Parliament was doing all it could against them—to stand still and wait for the action of Parliament. But it is the same Parliament, it is the same House of Commons which I left with sadness and apprehension in July last. There are in it yet the men who, on our side of the House, betrayed the cause which they were supposed to sit there to defend, and the only change that we know of is, that the men who threw out with all terms of ignominy the Bill which we wished to pass last session, are now and will be in February next—if they do not break in pieces before—they will be then on the Treasury bench, and will take that leading and authoritative position in the House which belongs to the Ministers of the Crown.

I differ from this writer altogether; I would not put any confidence in the course to be taken by this House of Commons if I were a man unenfranchised and asking for a vote. I should like them to tell me that they had wholly repented of the cheers with which they met all those vile and violent imputations upon your character. My opinion is this: that your duty, your obvious duty—a duty from which you cannot escape—is to go on as you have begun, to perfect in every part of the country your organisation in favour of your enfranchisement. It is to bring

every society with which you are connected, to give itself for a time—it will only be a short time—to the working out of your political redemption. I should advise you, whether you are supporters of the Reform League in London, or are connected in any way with the Reform Union of Manchester or any similar association, to establish a system of small, but weekly or monthly contributions. Do not allow my friend Mr. Beales—or my ancient friend and political brother, Mr. George Wilson of Manchester—do not allow them to want the means to carry on and direct the great societies of which they are chiefs. And let me beg of you, more than all else, to have no jealousies amongst each other. Give our Chairman his due; give Mr. Beales and the council their due; give every man who, with a single eye to this great question, is working zealously in your cause, his due, and help in every way you can every honest endeavour to bring this great national question to such a solid and final issue, that it shall no longer disturb the repose of this nation.

And lastly, I beg of you to rise to something like a just contemplation of what the great issue is for which you are contending. It is to make you citizens of one of the noblest nations on the face of the earth—of a nation which has a grand history in the past, and which I trust, partly through your help, will have a still grander history in the future. Let me beg of you, then, and it is the last word I may speak to you to-night, that, in all you do, you may be animated by a great and noble spirit, for you have set your hands and hearts to a great and noble work.

REFORM.

XII.

VOTING-PAPERS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 20, 1867.

From Hansard.

[The Government Reform Bill proposed to permit the vote to be given by 'Voting-papers,' and not to require personal attendance at the Poll. This was objected to by the Opposition on the ground that it would afford opportunity for fraud and for practices inconsistent with freedom of election. The Government proposition was rejected.]

I THINK the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has concluded his speech with perfect fairness, and left the decision to the House in a way worthy of the position he occupies. The debate has been one of considerable satisfaction to me, for whatever I may think of the proposition as it now stands, I cannot conceal from myself the fact that the arguments both on this and on that side of the House lead us a great deal further than the proposition itself; and should end, after this wide extension of the suffrage, in a change which in almost every other country has been made—namely, in establishing the vote by ballot. There are two divisions of this question, and to one of them the right hon. Gentleman applied himself; and other Members also touched upon the same—that is, with regard to out-voters.

I believe, if we were establishing a system of representation for the first time, that we should do in counties what we do in boroughs—we should take care that all the electors of the counties should be resident in the counties. A different system prevails, and I do not recommend that it should be interfered with; but I suggest that you should not, for the purpose of aiding the extension of the present system by adding to the non-resident voters, make a substantial change for which no substantial reason has been given.

The hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets has made a speech—one of the best and the most convincing that I have heard on the subject. He referred to what might be done by certain persons at certain Clubs. The Reform Club is very near the Carlton. If a man wants to go to one he is driven, not invariably, but occasionally, to the other. What the hon. Gentleman says might be done at the Reform Club might also be done at the Carlton. But what has been done? Take the case of a small Scotch county in which there

was a contest at the last election. The losing candidate had a decided majority of the resident voters in the county, and yet he did not take his seat in this House, and this through the influence of large proprietors—and of strangers whose votes might be called in question as contrary, if not to the letter, to the spirit of the law. These voters overruled the votes of the resident constituency, and the candidate who had the majority of the resident votes was defeated, and his opponent is, I presume, at this moment sitting somewhere in this House. [Cries of 'Name.'] Let any Gentleman who wants to know the name ask the Scotch Member who sits nearest him.

I trust that the decision of the House his session, and the passage of this 3ill, will lead to a more satisfactory epresentation of the country. I there- ore hope that there is no Member of ie House who would wish to see the ystem I have just described indefinitely xtended. And I am not speaking as gainst the influence of landed pro- rietors alone; there are other in- uences that can play this game. I ecollect some years ago, during the iscussion on the Corn-laws, that the riends of the Anti-Corn-law League esolved to purchase freeholds in some ounties, and threatened to change the epresentation of those counties. In a ase like that it would be a great bar o such a movement, that every voter, t the time of an election, should travel o the county where his freehold was ituate. It is not the true policy of he country—it is contrary to the in- erests of the country—it is opposed to he purity and reality of the electoral ystem, that you should give even to an minent lawyer like the hon. and learned ientleman on the front bench, or to ny landlord or club, any greater induce- ient than now exists to obtain votes in ounties where people do not reside, for he purpose of interfering with the real nd honest representation of the resi- ents of the county.

There are many small counties—some in England, some in Wales, and several in Scotland—in which there would be no difficulty, under this system, of placing as many persons on the register as would defeat the honest rights of the electors of those counties. The right hon. Gentleman dwelt on the success of the system as tried in the Universities; and some Gentlemen smiled because they thought he meant—what I am sure he did not mean—that it had proved successful in dislodging a late Member for the University of Oxford. But that is a small matter; and, if England were appealed to, England would say that it is of great advantage to the country that that dislodgement has taken place. But while the right hon. Gentleman defends the measure on account of its success at Oxford University, the right hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich admitted that the case was so entirely different that he would not base his argument in favour of the Bill on anything that had happened, or could happen, in connection with the learned Universities of the country. The Committee on which the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets sat, had the whole of the matter before it; and that Committee saw the great difference between the circumstances of the Universities and of the great constituencies of the country; and they distinctly—I know not if they were unanimous—rejected the proposition in regard to the country at large, and decided on special grounds that the plan might only be safely adopted in regard to the Universities.

I now pass to the other branch of the subject. My own belief is that it is bad. It seems to me that it has not the good effect—and I have never denied that there is some good in the system—of open voting. It escapes from that which you have always claimed as the great advantage of open voting, that is, the general publicity and influence of public opinion, and what you call the salutary effect of a man performing a great public duty in the face of his fellow-men. It is clear that the whole of that is got rid of by

his system. [Cheers and cries of 'No.'] It is clearly got rid of so far as this system will work.

The right hon. Gentleman calls it a permissive Bill. Of course, to individuals it is permissive, but on the whole country it can hardly be so styled. Wherever, being permissive, it is employed, it will entirely secure the voter from that public opinion under which every man in some degree acts when he goes to the poll and gives his vote in the face of his fellow-electors and townsmen. On the other hand, I complain of it very much, on this ground: that whilst it altogether shelters him from public opinion, it does not in the least give him the advantages of secret voting. The advantages of the really secret vote are these. You may estimate them at less than I do, but I think they are these—that when a man votes there is no power on earth to interfere with him but his own conviction as to what he ought to do, and he has a perfect freedom to carry out these convictions in his vote.

Now, a proposition which is so great a change that it repudiates all which you have said to be good in open voting, and does not accept a single particle of the good which we have said belongs to secret voting, at least is not a proposition which should be accepted hastily by the House. The right hon. Gentleman, following the example of many hon. Members, dwelt upon the expenses of county elections. I think those expenses are most deplorable. I was speaking to a Gentleman in this House the other day who said he was a candidate for ten days in a county which is neither very large nor very populous, and in those ten days his expenses were 4,000*l*. I know another candidate—I think I am not mis-stating the facts—who polled 2,000 votes, and they cost him 8,000*l*. But that expense is by no means all connected with the carriage of voters; a very large portion is connected with that hateful and intolerable system of legal agency, which is, I believe, all but universal in the counties, and which unfortunately prevails to a very large extent in a great number of boroughs. But there cannot be the smallest doubt that it is possible to cure that evil without this clause. With regard to the resident voters of a county, you might establish—and establish cheaply—polling-booths in so many districts that no man will have to go farther than he has to go every week to market, and very often he would have to go no farther than he goes on Sunday to church.

The noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Lord Cranborne), who made as good a speech as could be made in favour of this clause, spoke of persons who could not get to the poll—sick people and nervous people. I am not speaking of the sick, because we ought not to make special laws for a comparatively small portion of the people, and those who are sick are much better in their rooms and in bed, than taking any part whatever in the excitement of a contested election at a time when they are suffering mental and bodily depression. The noble Lord said there are many who do not go to the poll. I think he is entirely mistaken. I have had several contests in the course of my political career. Two contests in the city of Durham, two or three in the city of Manchester, and one at least in the town of Birmingham. I do not believe that any appreciable number—I cannot say that I ever heard of ten, nor even five, in the whole of these three constituencies—who could not go to the poll for any of the reasons stated by the noble Lord.

There is not the slightest doubt that his argument does not apply to the metropolitan boroughs, because if there are any boroughs which are free from confusion and riot it is those boroughs. Therefore, I hold that as regards this safeguard there is nothing in it. But there is this in it. The noble Lord appears to be wishful—I will not impute that, but I will say that it will be understood that he would establish a

system which would very nearly give the security of the Ballot to the rich people, and that it is for them that this system is mainly devised. I must leave hon. Gentlemen opposite to imagine how long it will be, if this class is adopted, before the Ballot itself will be established amongst all other classes. Now, as regards the poorer electors. My hon. Friend (Mr. Ayrton) described what would take place with agents. There is a wonderful fertility of invention at election times, and clever agents would busy themselves in the streets of our boroughs, and in some parts of the counties, with a view of obtaining these polling-papers.

And what happens when they have been signed and sent in? You establish one of the most hateful and most unheard-of things that can be imagined, which is the giving of votes by proxy. ' understand that lately there has been discussion in another place on the ıbject of voting by proxy, and there a general impression that this system -which no man defends upon any principle—will not last long. Therefore, hope the House of Commons will ɔt now attempt to establish in any ıape anything so unprincipled and ıteful with regard to our parliamenry elections as this would prove to :. Because, when any person has reived a number of voting-papers from ıy borough or part of a county, it is ıite clear that he can either poll them ' not, as he thinks fit. He can hold em back, or make a traffic of them. hey are not exactly bank notes; but he holds them in his hand, he may ıffic with them as if they were bank ıtes. Now, I think it

'Better to bear the ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of.'

I think the noble Lord, or at all events me hon. Members, have spoken of the ıaracter of magistrates. I am not a agistrate myself, and I should be sorry depreciate or lower their character in is House or in the country; but there nothing that stands, as I can see, between the present system of voting for Poor-law guardians, and this, but the magistrates. The magistrates are not infallible. I have known many magistrates who were not at all too acute to be taken in. And I think the security is not sufficient to justify the House in making the great change proposed.

The noble Lord made another observation, which was very unfortunate for him, and I am surprised that it should have escaped his lips. He went so far as to say that the drawing-room of the magistrate would be the place of the polling-booth. If I am not very much mistaken in the opinion of my countrymen, I think that observation will sink very deep into their minds and hearts; and if they thought such a thing were possible—and we have the authority of the noble Lord that it is advisable, and that he admires it—I say that is enough to condemn the Bill. The question is this—whether our whole system of polling should be changed to what is right, or whether it should be a general system of voting through the Post Office. My own impression is, that every man who gives a vote should appear before the recognised authority by whom that vote shall be recorded—whether he gives it openly, by saying, 'I am So-and-so, and I have voted for A, B, C, or D,' or whether he should vote as Englishmen do in the Australian colonies, by depositing a card or ticket.

I saw one hon. Member anticipating what I was going to say by the radiant smile which came over his countenance. But I am not now asking for the Ballot. What I say is this. I prefer what now exists to what you propose. Either let us have the open voting which we have, and which we all understand, and which we have had from time immemorial, so that we understand the good and evil of it, or let us go to that more excellent way of polling by the Ballot. At least, do not let us make a change, the results of which would, in my opinion, lead to very great danger in the corrupt exercise of the franchise throughout the country.

The hon. Gentleman the Member for

man now says the proposal was carried by a great majority in the House of Lords. The majority there was but 90 —here it was 140. A majority so large on a question which so particularly affects us and our constituencies—a majority of 140—is much more important in a matter of this kind than a majority of 90 in the other House.

I do not recollect the precise words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but I think he said it was a scheme to introduce into the House all sorts of crotchety people. I have no objection to crotchety people. I believe there must be all sorts of people in this House. I have never been in any Parliament in which there has not been at least one Member generally believed by the rest of the Members to be not quite strong—and excuses were made for his eccentric conduct because he was not as responsible as others. That, probably, will always be the case in the House of Commons. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said he did not want the introduction of crotchety people, but he condemned the proposal on stronger grounds, on grounds of the highest policy and constitutional principles. The Gentlemen I see opposite, and those not before convinced—as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxfordshire (Mr. Henley) was—accepted the arguments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I cannot presume to say that they were influenced by my arguments, although I offered them with as much force as I could. I think the arguments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were unanswerable.

Then what did Lord Derby say in the House of Lords? I presume we can speak of exalted persons who send Amendments down here from an exalted place. Lord Derby said the principle was entirely unconstitutional, and that 'its mischief would only be bounded by the extent or the narrowness of its operation.' I shall not pretend to have a greater reverence for Lord Derby than hon. Gentlemen opposite have; I have often thought him rash; I have often thought him unwise; and I have often had occasion during twenty-four years of political life to be in opposition to his views. But I think when he, as Prime Minister, having considered this question of Reform minutely since last session, expresses so strong an opinion on a point of this nature, is backed by the opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and of his friends, and is backed by a vote of more than 300—I forget how many voted, but the majority was 140—I have a right to state that his opinion as Prime Minister on a matter of this nature is one we should not lightly pass by. I think hon. Gentlemen opposite, if they will bear in mind the tone of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will feel that he adhered to his original opinion, and would have preferred that the House of Lords had not made the alteration. I think they may feel that they will only be carrying out what is for the true interest of the country, and what is the true wish of the Government, if they adhere to the vote they gave when the question was before us on a former occasion.

I said I thought our vote of more importance than that of the House of Lords. I do not pretend to say the House of Lords has not full power to consider this Bill and pass amendments upon it. They have the legal and the constitutional power to do that, and we have no right to call it in question. But in a matter affecting the fundamental principles of our representation, affecting the power of our representatives—of a considerable number of the Members of this House—affecting the status of Members of this House—the opinion and vote of the House of Commons is necessarily and must be of more weight than the vote of the House of Lords. It is a question of delicacy. It is possible that the House of Lords would not enter into any contest with regard to this, and that whatever the House of Commons may decide to do will be accepted with that moderation and dignity to which the right hon. Gentleman has paid—as he believes,

and as I hope—so just a tribute. What is the change you are about to make? It is a fundamental change. There is no precedent for it in our Parliamentary history. You affect by it the very foundation of what I may call the constitution of your constituencies.

I have said elsewhere that the alteration proposed has never been asked for. The hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate), I understand, presented a petition in favour of it from Birmingham. I am sorry it should come from Birmingham — that there should be a petition from Birmingham signed by a number of persons in favour of the change. [Mr. Newdegate: '4,000!'] Well, I will not dispute about numbers in regard to a town of 400,000 inhabitants. That is not an overwhelming consideration, especially as the 4,000 have just smarted from a defeat—I will not say an ignominious one, for it was not ignominious. At all events they have not been able to seat a Member for the minority, having been outvoted by their fellow-townsmen. I am sorry that men who were unable to return their candidate for Birmingham by a fair majority should come and ask this House, in obedience to the mandate of the House of Lords, to allow him to take his seat by the votes of the minority. With the exception of that case this proposal has never been asked for from the House of Commons, by any constituency, by petition, or at any public meeting. Never has there been a minority defeated fairly—I speak not of drink, or coercion, or bribery, and corruption—who did not accept that defeat in a fair spirit, and look forward to the time when, by the growth of their opinions and of their numbers, that minority would ultimately become a majority.

For six hundred years—as far as our Parliamentary annals go back, and one of the learned Clerks at the table can tell us how far they go back—the principle of Parliamentary election has been this, that the majority of the voices of a constituency to which the writ of the Crown has issued should elect a Member or Members to sit in this House, and no others. Bear this in mind. You are urged to accept a proposal of a most important character, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has denounced in the strongest language, of which Lord Derby says the mischief can only be bounded by the narrowness of its operation—when it has never come before the public for discussion. In all the discussions which have taken place this year or last year, at all the meetings which have been held, under roof or the open sky, there has been no debate, discussion, or consideration of the principle now offered to us in this clause as it has come down to this House. I would suggest, without unfairly urging my views, that the House of Commons should at least suspend its judgment in favour of this proposal until it has been a longer period before the country, and the constituencies have had an opportunity of considering it and making up their minds upon it.

It is often said that we are not delegates; but if we are not delegates, we are not rulers. We are sent here to represent the general views of our constituents. We have morally no power to cut off the influence of those constituents—to make fundamental changes in the Constitution, and to vary, alter, and overthrow the practice of six hundred years. This House is not in favour of it; a majority of 140 voted against it. You have no moral right, therefore, to agree to such a proposal, because a House which is not representative, which has no direct influence in the matter, and no Member of which can vote for a Member of this House, or without the infringement of our rules influence a vote at his election, chooses to suggest it. It is an unintelligible and unbelievable thing that this House should under these circumstances agree to a proposal which makes this fundamental change in our Constitution, which alters and cripples the power of four of the largest constituencies in the kingdom. What are these four con-

boroughs. But look at Huntingdon. There has been the greatest tranquillity in that borough for the last thirty years. Ever since the right hon. Gentleman (General Peel) went there, I believe there has been hardly a single contest. In all that time nothing can be more admirable than the way things have been managed. But Huntingdon is not a centre of political life. If all the boroughs of England were like Huntingdon, the political life of the country would be extinguished — its freedom would be extinguished—and when once England's freedom has gone, I wonder what there would be left in the country worth preserving.

One word of caution, if the House will permit me, before I close. You are about to give to many hundred thousands of your countrymen, not hitherto possessing it, a vote for a representative in Parliament. Lord Derby said last night, or a night or two ago, in the House of Lords, that you were taking a leap in the dark, and he trusts somehow or other that the ground upon which you are about to alight will be soft, and that you will not be much injured. But you are admitting this number of persons who have never hitherto had a vote in boroughs, and you ought to be guided by the ancient principles of the Constitution, by those principles which have been laid down for us by our ancestors and forefathers. You want those you are admitting to the franchise to be guided by the ancient principles of the Constitution in all that they do when they have power, in order that they may not depart from that great chart which I hope in some degree they have studied, and which was laid down by our forefathers in this House. Suppose you depart from it in this matter that we are now discussing, and introduce something entirely novel, something that cannot be defended by argument—for nobody in my opinion has ever attempted to defend it—the Chancellor of the Exchequer never heard of an argument about it which he thought worth answering—if you introduce something so entirely novel and so offensive, is it not possible that those who will have the power after this Bill passes may think also that there are many fantastic things which they might do, and doing them would be as much justified as the House is now in doing this?

When I have addressed great meetings of my countrymen I have always advised them to adhere strongly to that which is constitutionally and morally right. If they at any future time, whilst I am in Parliament or in any degree of prominence before the country, attempt to do things with regard to your class or order which I believe to be morally or constitutionally wrong, I shall be as firm in opposing them as I have been in supporting the rights which they have demanded. And I lament over the possibility of such a proposal as this being acceded to, because I am certain that it will afford an example hereafter to those who may wish to follow, not in this precise direction, but in some other direction which they may equally justify, but which may be very perilous and injurious to the country. I enter my protest against this proposal on all grounds. I enter it as one of the Members for a great constituency to which the other day you offered an additional Member, and from which you are now about to take one-half of their present political power. I say that constituency would prefer that the Member you are about to give it had been given to Keighley, St. Helen's, Barnsley, or Luton, as first proposed, than that it should be given under such conditions as you now wish to impose.

I saw 5,000 men only two nights ago in the Free Trade Hall in Manchester. It was not a packed meeting. Everybody in Manchester had a right to go. I believe about 1,000 paid to do so, and 4,000 or 5,000 went in free. They unanimously passed a Petition that has been presented to-night by my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, and in it they prayed the House to do one of three things. They asked that either

the borough might be divided as in the case of Glasgow—and why should Glasgow be in a better position as to its third Member than Liverpool, or Birmingham, or Manchester, or Leeds?—or that the majority should decide the election as at present, or, failing either of these courses, that the House should withdraw the fatal gift of an additional Member who is merely to be paired off against one of their present Members. Will you refuse that Petition? Has there ever been a case like this in the annals of the English Parliament, where a great constituency besought you not to confer upon them additional representation because you were going to give it in a manner notoriously destructive of their existing political power?

I say, then, as one of the Members for Birmingham, I wholly protest against this proposal. What will you do with my Colleague if I should be humiliated to sit for a borough in which I cannot say that I have been elected by the majority of the voices of the constituency? What will you say to the Member for the minority of Birmingham? Suppose we had had within the last few months three Members for Birmingham, and suppose, which is an impossible supposition, that my lamented Friend and late Colleague had been the Member for the minority. At his death there must have been a new writ issued for a Member for Birmingham. Would you, by any clause in this Bill, or in any future Bill, prevent the majority of that constituency from voting for his successor? What could you do in such a case? Or suppose that my hon. Colleague the Member for the minority in a future Parliament, if I should be unfortunate enough to be associated with such an one, proved to be serviceable to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Derby invited him to take a seat in his Government. Under this very Bill you have enacted that those who take certain offices shall be re-elected. But if he went down as Member for the minority of Birmingham, who is to elect him? Do you think the two-thirds who support myself and Colleague would be so condescending as to return your minority Member to sit as a part of a Government to which they are opposed?

The whole matter is so monstrous and so unconstitutional, that I feel that I am humiliating you and myself in discussing it. No, I am not humiliating you, because you do not believe in it—you believe in the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Well, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in one of the most impressive speeches ever made in this House—and no man speaks more impressively than he does when he speaks from his heart—opposed this scheme. You believed him, and voted with him. He thinks now as he thought then. He has followed my speech from beginning to end, and there is not a single word which he is prepared at this moment to contradict. This is not a question of mere convenience to the Government or of acquiescence with the House of Lords. The House of Lords has done what it thought was right, and if you should disagree, the House of Lords will consult, not only the interests of the country and the dignity of the House of Commons, but its own dignity, in acquiescing in the view you take.

You are a responsible and representative body. You have powers—though they cannot be written exactly; and though you cannot take a clause from the Constitution which shall strictly define them, you have powers that are far above the powers of the Monarchy or of the aristocracy in the House of Peers. Of those powers you cannot divest yourself. They spring from the very source of your existence, for you come from the people throughout the length and breadth of the country. You cannot and you dare not—I say you dare not—betray their rights and desert their interests. I am afraid the right hon. Gentleman will say I am speaking strongly and passionately, because I am one of the Members whose constituents are interested specially in this matter. I do not deny it. I should be ashamed

of myself if I did not admit that it made some difference in the earnestness and warmth of my feelings with regard to it. But if I went out of the House to-night—and I would rather go out of it to-night than vote for this proposal or sit for a constituency as the representative of the minority—if I were to leave the House to-night and never to return to it, I should entertain the same feeling, and should express it with the same warmth and earnestness with which I submit my views at this moment to the House.

May I ask the House to lift themselves just for a moment from any narrow view of party? It is not a question of party; let us put that aside altogether. Let us not suppose for a moment that we are going to injure or aid the Government—there is nothing of that kind in it. It will be greatly to the credit of Lord Derby and of the right hon. Gentleman in regard to the historic character of their measure that it should not be defaced by a great evil like this. I am speaking in their interest as much as any can do who have supported this Bill. Let us, therefore, get rid of the feeling of party—of the feeling that we are going to vote for or against the Government. Let us get rid of all feeling except that this change has been recommended to us by the House of Lords, in which there cannot be either the same knowledge or the same interest in the matter which exists in this House. Let us look at this simply as it refers to the great body in whose names we sit and speak here. Let us look at it in reference to that grand old freedom which our forefathers struggled for and secured, and maintained, and the advantages of which, from the day of our birth till this hour, we have been constantly enjoying. If this proposal had come before this House at the time when the great men, the giants of the English Constitution, sat in this House, they would have treated it in a manner far less decorous than we shall treat it. There is no name that appears among the great men of that day, parents of English freedom, which would not have been found among the names of those who shall this day say 'No!' to the mischievous proposition sent down to us by the House of Lords.

FREE TRADE.

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE, DECEMBER 19, 1845.

[During the agitation for the repeal of the Corn-laws, the Anti-Corn-law League held many great meetings in Covent Garden Theatre, at which Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, Mr. C. P. Villiers, and other prominent advocates of Free Trade, spoke on the great question of the day. The following speech was delivered at one of these celebrated Covent Garden meetings, held immediately after the temporary resignation of Sir Robert Peel.]

During the last month, I have visited, as one of a deputation from the Council of the League, many towns in this country. I have been present at meetings in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Somersetshire, and now in Middlesex; and I am forced to the conclusion that the agitation now in progress throughout this kingdom is one of no common or trivial character. Notwithstanding the hope that my Friend who has just addressed you has expressed, that it may not become a strife of classes, I am not sure that it has not already become such, and I doubt whether it can have any other character. I believe this to be a movement of the commercial and industrious classes against the lords and great proprietors of the soil.

Within the last fifty years trade has done much for the people of England. Our population has greatly increased; our villages have become towns, and our small towns large cities. The contemned class of manufacturers and traders has assumed another and a very different position, and the great proprietors of the soil now find that there are other men and interests to be consulted in this kingdom besides those of whom they have taken such great care through the legislation which they have controlled. In the varying fortunes of this contest we have already seen one feeble and attenuated Administration overthrown, and now we see another, which every man thought powerful and robust, prostrate in the dust. It is worth while that the people, and that statesmen, should regard this result, and learn from it a lesson. What was it that brought the Whig Government down in 1841, and what is it that has brought down Sir Robert Peel now? Have not we good grounds for asserting that the Corn-law makes it impossible for any party longer to govern England during its continuance? No statesman dare now take office upon the understanding that he is to maintain the system which the Protectionists have asserted to be a fundamental principle in the Constitution of the kingdom.

We have heard that the Whig

Government left the country in great distress, and its financial affairs in much embarrassment. But no one has ever pointed out the particular acts of that Government which made the revenue deficient. It was not the taking off of taxes injudiciously—it was not a more than ordinarily extravagant expenditure of the public funds which produced that effect; but it was the collapse of the national industry—it was the failure of the sources whence flow the prosperity of our trade, a calamity which arose from deficient harvests, those deficient harvests being destructive to our trade and industry, because the Corn-law denied to us the power of repairing the mischief by means of foreign supplies. Great landed proprietors may fancy that trade is of small importance; but of this we are at present assured, that no Government can maintain its popularity or keep up its power so long as we have deficient harvests and restrictions on the importation of foreign food.

Under such a state of things, how is social order to be preserved? When prices are high the revenue invariably declines, and higher taxes must be imposed; general discontent prevails, because there is general suffering; and the Government, whatever be its party name, or however numerous may be its supporters in either House of Parliament, must, under these circumstances, first become unpopular, and then, finally, become extinct. We are now brought to this conclusion, that the continuous government of this country by any administration is totally incompatible with the maintenance of the Corn-laws. Lord John Russell acknowledges it, and Sir Robert Peel, by his sudden retirement from office, has given his testimony to the fact. But there are men who deny it; such men, for example, as Sir John Tyrrell and Mr. Bramston, the latter celebrated, I believe, as the leader in the great land debate. These men, down in Essex, speak of Sir Robert Peel in the most opprobrious language. They say they are glad that the 'organised hypocrisy' is at an end—that they are delighted that 'the reign of humbug is over;' that they are astounded at the perfidy and treachery of the men whom they lifted into office. It is neither perfidy nor treachery of which they have to complain. Sir Robert Peel cannot, any more than other men, do impossibilities; and it is an impossibility to govern this country with the Corn-law in existence. Sir John Tyrrell, and the like of him, do not shrink from the heavy responsibility of attempting this impossible task; but Sir Robert Peel does shrink from it. Sir Robert Peel is in a very different position from that which they occupy. The country has a hold upon him; he is responsible, and as Prime Minister he knows that he must be held responsible. But, further, he is responsible also to posterity, and no man more than Sir Robert Peel wishes to stand well upon the page of his country's history. But as for the squires, the country has no hold upon them; it expects nothing from them, and will make them responsible for nothing. The Tyrrells and the Bramstons are lost amid the herd of squires, and nobody can lay hold of them to make them atone for national calamities. And if the country has no hold upon them, certainly posterity has none. No man who records the history of this period will ever write long paragraphs about the Tyrrells and the Bramstons. All that posterity will know of these, and of such as these, will be communicated to them upon a marble tablet in some obscure parish church.

This contest has now been waged for seven years; it was a serious one when commenced, but it is a far more serious one now. Since the time when we first came to London to ask the attention of Parliament to the question of the Corn-law, two millions of human beings have been added to the population of the United Kingdom. The table is here as before; the food is spread in about the same quantity as before; but two millions of fresh guests have arrived, and that circumstance makes the question a serious one, both for the Govern-

ment and for us. These two millions are so many arguments for the Anti-Corn-law League—so many emphatic condemnations of the policy of this iniquitous law. I see them now in my mind's eye ranged before me, old men and young children, all looking to the Government for bread; some endeavouring to resist the stroke of famine, clamorous and turbulent, but still arguing with us; some dying mute and uncomplaining. Multitudes have died of hunger in the United Kingdom since we first asked the Government to repeal the Corn-law, and although the great and powerful may not regard those who suffer mutely and die in silence, yet the recording angel will note down their patient endurance and the heavy guilt of those by whom they have been sacrificed.

We have had a succession of skirmishes; we now approach the final conflict. It may be worth while to inquire who and what are the combatants in this great battle? Looking in the columns of the newspapers, and attending, as I have attended, hundreds of meetings held to support the principles of Free Trade, we must conclude, that on the face of it the struggle is that of the many against the few. It is a struggle between the numbers, wealth, comforts, the all in fact, of the middle and industrious classes, and the wealth, the union, and sordidness of a large section of the aristocracy of this empire; and we have to decide,—for it may be that this meeting itself may to no little extent be the arbiter in this great contest,—we have to decide now in this great struggle, whether in this land in which we live, we will longer bear the wicked legislation to which we have been subjected, or whether we will make one effort to right the vessel, to keep her in her true course, and, if possible, to bring her safely to a secure haven. *Our object, as the people, can* only be, that we should have good and impartial government for everybody. As the whole people, we can by no possibility have the smallest interest in any partial or unjust legislation: we do not wish to sacrifice any right of the richest or most powerful class, but we are resolved that that class shall not sacrifice the rights of a whole people.

We have had landlord rule longer, far longer than the life of the oldest man in this vast assembly, and I would ask you to look at the results of that rule, and then decide whether it be not necessary to interpose some check to the extravagance of such legislation. The landowners have had unlimited sway in Parliament and in the provinces. Abroad, the history of our country is the history of war and rapine: at home, of debt, taxes, and rapine too. In all the great contests in which we have been engaged we have found that this ruling class have taken all the honours, while the people have taken all the scars. No sooner was the country freed from the horrible contest which was so long carried on with the powers of Europe, than this law, by their partial legislation, was enacted—far more hostile to British interests than any combination of foreign powers has ever proved. We find them legislating corruptly: they pray daily that in their legislation they may discard all private ends and partial affections, and after prayers they sit down to make a law for the purpose of extorting from all the consumers of food a higher price than it is worth, that the extra price may find its way into the pockets of the proprietors of land, these proprietors being the very men by whom this infamous law is sustained.

In their other legislation we find great inequality. For example, they deal very leniently with high gaming on the turf, and very severely with chuck-farthing and pitch and toss. We find them enacting a merciless code for the preservation of wild animals and vermin kept for their own sport; and, as if to make this law still more odious, we find them entrusting its administration, for the most part, to sporting gentlemen and game preservers. We find throughout England and Wales, that

the proportion of one in eleven of our whole population consists of paupers; and that in the south and south-western counties of England, where squiredom has never been much interfered with, the pauperism is as one to seven of the *whole population*. We find, moreover, that in Scotland there is an amount of suffering no less, perhaps, though not so accurately set down in figures. We find the cottages of the peasantry pulled down in thousands of cases, that the population on the landed estates may be thinned, and the unfortunate wretches driven into the towns to procure a precarious support, or beyond the ocean, to find a refuge in a foreign land. But in that country across the Channel, whence we now hear the wail of lamentation, where trade is almost unknown, where landowners are predominant and omnipotent, we find not one in seven, but at least half the population reduced to a state which may be termed a condition of pauperism.

The men who write for Protectionist newspapers sometimes heap their scorn upon the inhabitants of the American republic. New York is that State of the Union in which there is the most pauperism, for to that State the stream of emigration from this country and from Ireland flows; and yet in that State, the most pauperised in the whole republic, there is only one pauper to every 184 of the population. It is true that they have not an hereditary peerage to trust to. They know nothing there of a House of Lords, seventy or eighty Members of which deposit their legislative power in the hands of one old man. It is not a wise thing for the hereditary peerage and the Protectionist party to direct the attention of the people of this country to the condition of the American republic. We do not expect perfection either in the New World or in the Old; all we ask is, that when an abuse is pointed out, it may be fairly and openly inquired into, and, if it be proved to be an abuse, honestly abated.

I am always fearful of entering upon the question of the condition of that portion of our working population amongst whom these squires and lords principally live; but I find that those newspapers which stand in a very ambiguous character before the public, which sometimes are, and sometimes are not, the organs of the Government, but are always organs which play a tune that jars upon the nerves of the people—I find those papers are now endeavouring to play the old game of raising hostile feelings in the manufacturing districts between the employers and the employed. Let them write; bread has risen too much within the last six months, and within the last two months trade has suffered too sad a reverse, for their writing to have any effect now. There is the most cordial, complete, and, I believe I may add, lasting union amongst all classes in the manufacturing districts in reference to this cause. But how stands the case in the rural districts? Can the Protectionists call a meeting in any town or village in the kingdom, giving a week's notice of their intention to call their tenants together, and imagine that they will have a vote *in favour of Protection?*

They sometimes think we are hard upon the aristocracy. They think that the vast population of Lancashire and Yorkshire are democratic and turbulent. But there are no elements there, except that of great numbers, which are to be compared in their dangerous character with the elements of disaffection and insubordination which exist round about the halls and castles of this proud and arrogant aristocracy. You have seen in the papers, within the last fortnight, that the foul and frightful crime of incendiarism has again appeared. It always shows itself when we have had for some short time a high price of bread. The Corn-law is as great a robbery of the man who follows the plough as it is of him who minds the loom, with this difference, that the *man who follows the plough* is, *of the* two, nearest the earth, and it takes less power to press him into it. Mr. Benett, one of the Members for Wiltshire, at

an agricultural meeting held not long since, made a very long speech, in which he said some remarkable things—the most remarkable being, that if he had again to come into the world, and had the option of choosing the particular rank or class in society to which he would belong, after reviewing, I believe, a period of about seventy years, he confessed that he would choose to be an agricultural labourer. Now, this sentiment is certainly of a very novel character; and it is one worth examining, coming, as it did, from a man who had at one time, I am told, a property of eight or ten thousand a-year in land.

Now, what is the condition of this agricultural labourer, for whom they tell us Protection is necessary? He lives in a parish whose owner, it may be, has deeply mortgaged it. The estate is let to farmers without capital, whose land grows almost as much rushes as wheat. The bad cultivation of the land provides scarcely any employment for the labourers, who become more and more numerous in the parish; the competition which there is amongst these labourers for the little employment to be had, bringing down the wages to the very lowest point at which their lives can be kept in them. They are heart-broken, spirit-broken, despairing men. They have been accustomed to this from their youth, and they see nothing in the future which affords a single ray of hope. We have attended meetings in those districts, and have been received with the utmost enthusiasm by these round-frocked labourers. They would have carried us from the carriage which we had travelled in, to the hustings; and if a silly squire or a foolish farmer attempted any disturbance or improper interference, these round-frocked men were all around us in an instant, ready to defend us; and I have seen them hustle many a powerful man from the field in which the meeting was being held.

If there be one view of this question which stimulates me to harder work in this cause than another, it is the fearful sufferings which I know to exist amongst the rural labourers in almost every part of this kingdom. How can they be men under the circumstances in which they live? During the period of their growing up to manhood, they are employed at odd jobs about the farm or the farm-yard, for wages which are merely those of little children in Lancashire. Every man who marries is considered an enemy to the parish; every child who is born into the world, instead of being a subject of rejoicing to its parents and to the community, is considered as an intruder come to compete for the little work and the small quantity of food which is left to the population. And then comes toil, year after year, long years of labour, with little remuneration; but perhaps at sixty or seventy, a gift of 20s. and a coat, or of 2*l*., from the Agricultural Society, because they have brought up a large family, and have not committed that worst of all sins, taken money from the parochial rates. One of their own poets has well expressed their condition:—

'A blessed prospect—
To slave while there is strength—in age the workhouse,
A parish shell at last, and the little bell
Toll'd hastily for a pauper's funeral!'

But the crowning offence of the system of legislation under which we have been living is, that a law has been enacted, in which it is altogether unavoidable that these industrious and deserving men should be brought down to so helpless and despairing a condition. By withdrawing the stimulus of competition, the law prevents the good cultivation of the land of our country, and therefore diminishes the supply of food which we might derive from it. It prevents, at the same time, the importation of foreign food from abroad, and it also prevents the growth of supplies abroad, so that when we are forced to go there for them they are not to be found. The law is, in fact, a law of the most ingeniously malignant cha-

racter. It is fenced about in every possible way. The most demoniacal ingenuity could not have invented a scheme more calculated to bring millions of the working classes of this country to a state of pauperism, suffering, discontent, and insubordination than the Corn-law which we are now opposing.

And then a fat and sleek dean, a dignitary of the Church and a great philosopher, recommends for the consumption of the people—he did not read a paper about the supplies that were to be had in the great valley of the Mississippi, but he said that there were Swede turnips and mangel-wurzel;—and the Hereditary Earl Marshal of England, as if to out-herod Herod himself, recommends hot water and a pinch of curry-powder. I was rejoiced, not for the sake of the Duke of Norfolk, for I pitied him, but still I was in my heart rejoiced when I saw the speech which he had made in Sussex. The people of England have not, even under thirty years of Corn-law influence, been sunk so low as to submit tamely to this insult and wrong. It is enough that a law should have been passed to make your toil valueless, to make your skill and labour unavailing to procure for you a fair supply of the common necessaries of life—but when to this grievous iniquity they add the insult of telling you to go, like beasts that perish, to mangel-wurzel, or to something which even the beasts themselves cannot eat, then I believe the people of England will rise, and with one voice proclaim the downfall of this odious system.

This law is the parent of many of those grievous fluctuations in trade under which so much suffering is created in this commercial kingdom. There is a period coming—it may be as bad or worse than the last—when many a man, now feeling himself independent and comfortable in his circumstances, will find himself swept away by the torrent, and his goodly ship made a complete wreck. Capital avails almost nothing; fluctuations in trade we have, such as no prudence can guard against. We are in despair one year, and in a state of great excitement in the next. At one time ruin stares us in the face, at another we fancy that we are getting rich in a moment. Not only is trade sacrificed, but the moral character of the country is injured by the violent fluctuations created by this law. And now have we a scarcity coming or not? They say that to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and that a famine foretold never comes. And so this famine could not have come if the moment we saw it to be coming we had had power to relieve ourselves by supplies of food from abroad. The reason why a famine foretold never comes, is because when it is foreseen and foretold, men prepare for it, and thus it never comes. But here, though it has been both foreseen and foretold, there is a law passed by a paternal legislature, remaining on the statute-book, which says to twenty-seven millions of people, 'Scramble for what there is, and if the poorest and the weakest starve, foreign supplies shall not come in for fear some injury should be done to the mortgaged landowners.'

Well, if this class of whom I have spoken have maintained this law for thirty years—if they continued it from 1838 to 1842—be assured that no feeling of mercy, no relenting, no sympathy for the sufferings of the people, will weigh one atom in the scale in making them give up the law now. They have no one to whom they can look for a promise to maintain it; but we have some one to whom to look for a promise to repeal it. But the promises of Lord John Russell, or any other minister, are entirely conditional. He knows that he alone cannot repeal the Corn-law. I had almost said that the overturning of the monarchy would be a trifle compared with the touching of the pockets of the squires. Lord John Russell himself has said that it can only be done by the unequivocal expression of the public will. How is this expression to be made? By meetings such as this, and by the meetings which myself and others have seen in

all parts of the kingdom; and also by preparations of the most active character for that general election which, in all human probability, is near upon us.

I believe you have heard that we had a meeting in Manchester the other day, which was attended by more of the wealth and influence of that district than I have ever seen assembled at a meeting of the same numbers before. It was resolved on Tuesday to have a general meeting of all those who are wishful to support the League in this great and final struggle. It has been announced that the Council of the League are calling upon their friends throughout the country to raise a fund of 250,000*l.* for the purpose of being ready in any emergency, and for the sake of maintaining before the ranks of the Protectionists, at least, as bold and resolute a character as we have maintained for the past seven years. Now, that money will be subscribed as it is required, and that large sum will be paid, and I can promise this meeting and the country that it will be honestly and judiciously applied to carry out the great national object for which the League has been established. If the Protectionists like to defer the settlement of this question till the warm weather comes, we will not trouble our friends to tear themselves half to pieces in getting within the walls of this theatre, but we will ask them to meet here, in Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, Sheffield, Birmingham, and other towns, in numbers so great, in unanimity so remarkable, and in resolution so undaunted, that the aristocracy of this country, with all their pride of ancestry and their boasted valour, will quail before the demonstration that will then be made.

Two centuries ago the people of this country were engaged in a fearful conflict with the Crown. A despotic and treacherous monarch assumed to himself the right to levy taxes without the consent of Parliament and the people. That assumption was resisted. This fair island became a battle-field, the kingdom was convulsed, and an ancient throne overturned. And, if our forefathers two hundred years ago resisted that attempt—if they refused to be the bondmen of a king, shall we be the born thralls of an aristocracy like ours? Shall we, who struck the lion down, shall we pay the wolf homage? or shall we not, by a manly and united expression of public opinion, at once, and for ever, put an end to this giant wrong?

Our cause is at least as good as theirs. We stand on higher vantage-ground; we have large numbers at our back; we have more of wealth, intelligence, union, and knowledge of the political rights and the true interests of the country; and, what is more than all this—we have a weapon, a power, and machinery, which is a thousand times better than that of force, were it employed—I refer to the registration, and especially to the 40*s.* freehold, for that is the great constitutional weapon which we intend to wield, and by means of which we are sure to conquer, our laurels being gained, not in bloody fields, but upon the hustings and in the registration courts. Now, I do hope, that if this law be repealed within the next six months, and if it should then be necessary that this League should disperse, I do trust that the people of England will bear in mind how great a panic has been created among the monopolist rulers by this small weapon, which we have discovered hid in the Reform Act, and in the Constitution of the country. I would implore the middle and working classes to regard it as the portal of their deliverance, as the strong and irresistible weapon before which the domination of this hereditary peerage must at length be laid in the dust.

BURDENS ON LAND.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 15, 1849.

From Hansard.

[On March 8, 1849, Mr. Disraeli submitted a resolution to the effect that the whole of the local taxation of the country falls mainly, and presses with undue severity, on real property. He suggested that one-half of these local rates should be paid out of the Consolidated Fund. The debate was adjourned to March 15, when the resolution was negatived by 280 votes to 189.]

It seems to me that a great deal of misapprehension exists among hon. Gentlemen on the benches opposite with regard to the proposition of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire. We were originally given to understand, if I mistake not, that the basis or groundwork of that proposition was the prevalence of great distress among all classes of the community connected with agriculture in this country. But the speech of the hon. Mover of the proposition described a case of a very different description, whilst the speech of the hon. Member for Somersetshire, who has just sat down, has apprised you that none of the distress resulting from the burdens on land complained of falls on that class, whom the hon. Mover would induce you to relieve by adopting his proposition.

The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire, in his speech on introducing this question, quoted something which I am said to have stated on a former occasion, admitting the great distress prevailing among the agricultural classes. He misquoted what I then said; very unintentionally I am quite sure, but very strangely. I never expressed myself to the effect—and, if I had done so, I should have betrayed great ignorance of that which must be within the cognisance or experience of almost every man—that, generally speaking, the distress of the times has been very severely felt by the agricultural community. I said that little had been said about the pressure of agricultural distress farther northwards than Cambridge or Suffolk, and that in the south of England the cry of agricultural distress had scarcely been heard of. And I say further, that hardly anything has been ever asserted of late in the north as to the depression of agricultural prices.

Well, Sir, I can only assure the House that I met but a few days ago with some gentlemen who had lately come up from the southern counties of Scotland, and who told me that they had been selling their wheat in the markets there at from 47*s.* to 48*s.* per quarter on an average. They had a fair crop last year of good quality, and they are satisfied with the prices they have received. They must be subject to the same vicissitudes, for example, as men are in every other trade. Farmers, no more than any other traders, can expect to be always lucky. Just prior to the harvest of last year, the rain fell exactly at the critical moment for the farmers of the south, and just before the critical mo-

ment for the farmers of the north. What has been the consequence? The farmers of the northern counties have harvested their produce in good condition, and obtain good prices; those of the south have been less fortunate, and realise less encouraging returns. This is simply the reason why we have great complaints from the one, and few or none from the other class of tenant-farmers. If any of these parties, however, seek a ground upon which to found his appeal to Parliament for legislative relief, he must look for it in the speech of the hon. Member for Somersetshire, whose fortune it has been to make such an appeal in vain.

I shall not enter into those questions connected with the general condition of the trade and finances, and of the agricultural classes of this country, which have been already, in my opinion, disposed of by the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down made one statement upon which I must be allowed to offer a word or two. That hon. Member told us that he had lately been selling some wheat. He told us that his wheat was only of inferior quality, yet that he realised, I think, 42*s.* per quarter for it. Now, I think if he could get such prices for an inferior wheat, wheat of ordinary average goodness must be fetching very fair prices just now. There are other Gentlemen, Sir, in this House who are themselves manufacturers of other articles. I should like to ask the hon. Member for Somersetshire what he thinks is the scale of prices they obtain when they carry into the market that which they admit to be a damaged or an inferior article. They will obtain, of course, only the lowest scale of prices for such goods. They will not get after the rate of 42*s.*, which the hon. Member who complains of unremunerating prices can obtain for his inferior article—a wheat of inferior quality. But as for better wheats, I met with a gentleman a few days since who told me that Dantzic wheat was worth now, in London, from 53*s.* to 54*s.* per quarter. He added, that other foreign wheats of fair quality were obtaining, on an average, about 48*s.* per quarter. I tell the hon. Gentlemen opposite to me, that their home-grown wheat, of the same quality, will now fetch the same prices.

I say, then, that the pretences on which this motion has been brought forward have totally failed—that no ground has been laid for any change in the existing burdens upon the land, which can be justified, either by the present condition of the tenant-farmer, or by the prices of agricultural produce in our markets. I do not intend to enter into any elaborate array of figures in following the statements which have been made by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire, in the speech with which he introduced his motion; because, all that could be said in reference to them was said, last night, by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, certainly in the best speech which I have ever heard from these benches since the accession of the right hon. Gentleman and of his Colleagues to power. But the right hon. Gentleman did not, as it appeared to me, notice some points in the case or plea on which the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire rested his case for our adoption of such a proposal as he has brought forward, or at least did not regard them in all the lights under which they might have been viewed.

The hon. Gentleman seems to adopt for his principle the notion that all classes of the community ought to bear, collectively, certain burdens which he assumes to be, at present, borne exclusively by the landed proprietary and real property of this country. Is this so? If such be really the proposition of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire—and that it is, I must presume from the statement of the hon. Member for Somersetshire—how does the speech we have just heard support it? The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire admits that he is opposed to, and would not vote for, a national rate of this

kind. And I think he is very wise in coming to this conclusion. The arguments against a national rate are, in my mind, of insuperable force. I am firmly persuaded that the various expenses connected with it would run up these rates, of which the burden is already said to be oppressive, at least five-fold within five years.

But I think the original objects and working of these local rates have been a good deal misunderstood. A Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on Local Taxation was printed in 1843. I will read one remarkable passage from this Report; a passage which clearly defines the period at and the circumstances under which the practice of rating stock in trade for the relief of the poor was first resorted to in this country:—

'The practice of rating stock in trade never prevailed in the greater part of England and Wales. It was, with comparatively few exceptions, confined to the old clothing district of the south and west of England. It gained ground just as the stock of the woolstaplers and clothiers increased, so as to make it an object with the farmers and other ratepayers, who still constituted a majority in their parishes, to bring so considerable a property within the rate. They succeeded by degrees, and there followed upon their success a more improvident practice in giving relief than had ever prevailed before in England. It was in this district, and at this time, that relief by head-money had its origin, and produced its most conspicuous effects in deteriorating the habits and depreciating the wages of the agricultural labourer. When the practice of rating stock in trade was fully established in this district, the staple trade rapidly declined there, and withdrew itself still more rapidly into the northern clothing districts, where no such burden was ever cast upon the trade.'

Now, the hon. Gentleman appears to contend that these burdens should be imposed on all classes of the community, instead of one particular class, and that by such a redistribution a great good would be effected, so far as the landlord and tenant-farmer are concerned. But, unless he could devise some means for getting at the same principle of rating all property equally, he would accomplish nothing towards effecting his own purpose. I happen to be connected with the local administration of a township in which the proportion of local rating actually expended on the relief of the poor does not exceed, perhaps, 7*d.* in the pound. There are townships and districts in its immediate neighbourhood in which the rate for the same purpose is not less than 7*s.* or 8*s.* in the pound. Now, it is quite clear that any manufacturer or capitalist who is largely engaged in trade, and has built a mill or a factory in such a district, would be anxious, under a general rate, to come within such a township, and thus so much enhance the charge for the relief of the poor, under any pressure of trade that should throw labour largely out of employment, as to drive away particular trades, as well as capitalists, from the locality. All rates would, under such a state of things, be enormously increased, and you would thus, by supporting the proposition before the House, be accessory to the ruin of both the landed and the commercial interests of the kingdom.

It has been said that the proposition of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire is enveloped in a great deal of mystery and confusion. I have endeavoured to penetrate the veil by which it is surrounded; and I will endeavour to explain the conclusions at which I have arrived upon it. It appears, then, to me that it is a proposition intended to withdraw burdens to the amount of some 6,000,000*l.* per annum from certain shoulders on which they are now saddled, and to impose them upon others—to relieve, in short, those who now carry them, by transferring them to those who hitherto have not borne them. The hon. Gentleman's scheme of redistribution would probably reimpose 3,000,000*l.* on those

from whom he would take the present aggregate of 6,000,000*l*., and apportion the other 3,000,000*l*. to other classes of the community. Well; but the 3,000,000*l*. that he would so withdraw from those who at present pay 6,000,000*l*., would by no means represent the real proportion in which hon. Gentlemen opposite desire to relieve the land from its present liabilities, or of the enhanced value which their scheme would practically confer upon the land generally. Assuming the whole aggregate of land in this kingdom capable of cultivation to represent an increase equal to what it has been stated at by Gentlemen opposite, a rise in the value of the fee-simple of an acre, consequent on the remission of three millions of taxation on that aggregate, would be equivalent to 2 per cent., or 60,000,000*l*. sterling. An increased value of 2*l*. per cent. would represent 120,000,000*l*. as the increased value of the land, supposing it to be brought for sale into the market, or that the Legislature sanctioned such a proposition as that which is now before it.

I, for one, do not think that these are times in which the Legislature could be brought to listen to any such proposition. It is not likely, I trust, to meet with much favour from this House. The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire and his friends seem altogether to forget the ultimate effect if Parliament entertains so exclusive a proposition as he has brought before it with a view of benefiting the landlord. If I am not mistaken, the whole cultivable lands of all England and Wales amount to more than twenty-five—perhaps, indeed, to thirty—millions of acres. Every acre you would thus relieve, I must repeat, would rise in value in the proportion of from 5*l*. to 10*l*. ['No.'] Well, I will be content to say 5*l*. only. This increase would represent an extension of capital invested in the lands held by tenant-farmers and others of not less than 150,000,000*l*. sterling. Would not this be to perpetrate a great injustice to all other descriptions of property for the sake of an exclusive benefit to the land? I ask hon. Gentlemen opposite whether or not they themselves consider that this would be right or proper?

I do think, however, that the proposition now before the House is not less extraordinary than it is unjust. It has for its ostensible object to relieve the present pressure of that which I believe to be the temporary distress of the landed interest. But then the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire is so very discriminating in his views of that question, that the case of the agriculturists of Scotland did not elicit even a single word in his speech. And as for the agriculturists, or any other classes of the unhappy community of the sister island, he turned the cold shoulder to the Irish, and all his sympathy for them extended to that which is proverbially said to be the alms of those who have no money in their pockets wherewith to afford more substantial relief. He gave them advice. Sir, the hon. Gentleman said that many schemes had been brought forward for the amelioration of the condition of Ireland, but that nothing effectual had been done for her for some sessions past. And here his admission left her. I do not think that Ireland will derive any great benefit from the advocacy of the hon. Gentleman. She will have little to thank him for, if he is prepared to tender her no other consolation for her sufferings but—his advice.

It has been contended that the proposition of the hon. Member would, if carried into effect, remove a great cause of dissatisfaction among the tenant-farmers. But I am convinced that it would create very great discontent among the people. [Laughter.] I repeat this is my conviction—notwithstanding the laughter which it has occasioned. The hon. Member who spoke last has quoted largely from a paper well known to most of those who hear me—a print of great authority in all agricultural society, and of great respectability—I mean the *Mark Lane Express*. The

article from which the hon. Gentleman read, indulges in stronger language, perhaps, than I should desire to employ: it stigmatises certain official documents, the authenticity of which it challenges, as the most deceiving statements ever concocted by the duplicity of man. It also expresses great dissatisfaction at the proposition of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire. I really think that the proposition of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire is founded on fallacies which are intended to beguile the House into its adoption, but which are amenable to a censure scarcely less severe. That proposition, indeed, reminds me of a story which many hon. Gentlemen have perhaps heard before, yet which I will venture to tell the House in very few words. It happened once, in a country town, and an agricultural district, that a company of strolling players proposed to get up a performance 'for the benefit of the poor' of the neighbourhood. It was calculated by those who announced this intention that the object of contributing towards the relief of the poor would certainly induce the gentry to come forward generously in supporting the performance; and the event proved the soundness of this anticipation. But when it came to a question as to how the proceeds were to be appropriated, the strolling company claimed them all for themselves, on the principle that they themselves were 'the poor' intended.

This is just the case with the proposal of the hon. Member, if you look at its real tendencies. He would procure this boon for the tenant-farmers—of relief from local rates; but he does not go—nor any of his hon. friends near him—for the repeal of the Malt-tax. 'We,' he says, 'do not ask for that at present. It is not the time to ask this relief for you; for we don't go for a revision of the whole scheme of existing taxation.' As to the Malt-tax, I am not altogether prepared to embrace all the views entertained by some of my hon. friends on that subject. I am not one of those who think that the people at large will be much the happier for being relieved from the Malt-tax. As little do I think you will make the people generally more satisfied by taxing malt; or that you will ever succeed in getting rid of drunkenness, or any other vice, simply by rendering its indulgence dear. But I do think that if by repealing the duty on malt, you leave more money in the poor man's pocket for the purchase of other articles of more profit, or value, or convenience to him than that into the cost of which this tax enters, you do well; and notwithstanding what an hon. Baronet has said in the course of this debate, I believe what has fallen from the hon. Member for Lincolnshire, that the Malt-tax is one injurious to agriculture, and oppressive upon the working labourer and consumer. I own that I am astonished at the conduct of hon. Gentlemen opposite on this question, after hearing them both in this House and at public meetings out of doors advocate the repeal of the Malt-tax. The same parties who on this side of the House were its most strenuous advocates, have ceased to mention it now that they have crossed to the benches opposite.

> 'Their lips are now forbid to speak
> That once familiar word.'

Not one voice now calls for that favourite act of justice, but we are told to wait till the proper time shall arrive.

The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire holds this language, but he has not indicated when the time will come. I wish the hon. Gentleman would look a little into the real state of the country; if he would consult the feelings of the people, he would find that nothing more displeases them than to have their representatives hold one language here, and another before their constituents. Sir, hon. Gentlemen know, that at meetings in the country, even tithes are permitted in their presence to be spoken of in the most violent and intemperate language. They encourage, by their own conduct, the people to expect

remissions of burdens which must diminish the public revenues, and leave it to Parliament to provide the substitute as best it may. I am astonished at the conduct of hon. Gentlemen. If I were myself an owner of land, I should say this to my tenant-farmers: 'Men, you have got the land, and it must be your object to work it to the best of your ability with the capital you have. Parliament, like the landlord, must deal with those on whose behalf this proposition is said to be made, on the same principles on which it would deal with trades of all other descriptions. You must exert the same virtues of perseverance, industry, and frugality which others possess, and in which you are not wanting; you must look to the exercise of these means for your profit and success, not to external aid or exclusive assistance, which can only be rendered at the cost of gross injustice to others.'

But the speech of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire was so purely agricultural, that he did not enter into any such considerations. He recognised no such principle of dealing with the interests of all classes, instead of addressing ourselves to the benefit of one only. He himself quoted from the *Standard*, a newspaper of high authority with his party, and so exclusively agricultural in its predilections, that in one of its leaders a few years ago it contended that if the whole of the manufactures of England were destroyed tomorrow, England would not be a less great country by one iota, or the English a less happy people. But the *Standard* now takes up different ground. It announced in a recent number that unions were now formed in most of the southern counties of England, the object of which was carefully to exclude all the products of the mills of the north, so that the cloths of Cheshire and Yorkshire would not be allowed to come into competition with the productions of Wiltshire. If this is to be the spirit in which hon. Gentlemen are disposed to make common cause against the manufacturing interest, I wonder they do not carry out their principle to its full extent, and, as their ancestors once wandered over the country clothed in skins and with their bodies painted, that they do not come down here in that way. They might come at last to clothe themselves in thatch, by which means I trust the farmers will obtain a remunerative price for their straw.

I am not at all disposed to dispute the meritorious and industrious character of the tenant-farmers; on the contrary, I believe them well entitled to the praise of possessing those qualities in a high degree. But I protest against a proposition on their behalf which would certainly prejudice the interests of all other classes for the doubtful benefit of one. I am opposed to all these partial experiments. I would willingly support any proposition which went to the reduction of those taxes on raw material which stand in the way of manufacturing labour and close the market on the industry of our artisans. This proposition was recommended to our sympathy on behalf of farmers who have small or no capital; but what would be said of any similar proposition by which it should be proposed to mulct the manufacturers of the north for the benefit of manufacturers without capital in the south? You ought to endeavour to secure to your farms men who have capital and great spirit in agriculture. But you do not do this. If a farmer comes to you, and asks for a farm, wishing to make stipulations—which may be called stipulations of a commercial character—such as that he shall plough and grow as he likes, that he shall have every creature that lives upon the land, and that he must not have it infested with game; if such a man comes to you, you do not like him as a tenant: but it is the consequence of free trade that you must introduce such principles in your future arrangements between landlord and tenant. It is impossible that this great country, with its large and increasing interests, and its dense population, should stand still or rest under the baneful influence

of protection to agriculture, simply because you are unwilling to adopt those principles with relation to your tenants which are adopted in every other branch of industry throughout this country.

Now our proposition is admitted on all hands, I believe, to be more distinct and intelligible than that of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire. He has come forward as a Chancellor of the Exchequer—as the framer of a budget—but it is clear that he is only a novice in his new work, because he has not shown where he is going to obtain the money which he is wishing to remit in the shape of taxation. I suppose, judging from what slight hints fell from the hon. Gentleman, that he means to increase the income-tax; or the hon. Baronet the Member for Lincolnshire (Sir M. Cholmeley) says that a fixed duty upon corn will serve the purpose as well. But let hon. Gentlemen beware how they turn their attention to the question of the reimposition of the duties upon corn. If you do so, you are attempting that which, I believe, is as impossible as the repeal of any Act which has passed this House in former times. You might probably effect the repeal of the Reform Bill or the Catholic Emancipation Act in the same session as that in which you reimpose the duty upon corn. Take care what you are about. Hon. Gentlemen fancy that there is a lull in the public mind; that events abroad have frightened people at home. Bear in mind that in all the European capitals a system is being established which will have a strange effect upon the minds of people in this country, who are looking, and wisely looking, to great and permanent changes in the constitution of Parliament; and that whilst your conduct is encouraging such ideas, you are leading the farmers of England in the pursuit of that false and uncertain light which must land them hereafter in the midst of difficulties much greater than those which encompass them at present.

You talk of the experiment of Free Trade as though it had failed, or was but an experiment. I ask, have you not legislated, since the oldest amongst you first came here, in favour of Protection, and with the view of keeping up the price of corn; and do you not recollect that under protective laws in 1836 the whole average price of the year for good wheat—not sprouted wheat—was but 39*s*. 4*d*. per quarter? whilst now, as we are told, sprouted wheat is sold at 42*s*. a quarter. Because that system was abolished, you have wreaked your vengeance upon a Minister. You have scattered a powerful party—you have shown an anger which political parties in this country have scarcely ever exhibited, because through the power, and I will say the patriotism, of the Minister whom you discarded, the industry of this great and growing population has escaped from the pressure of that screw which, through the medium of the Corn-laws, you had laid upon the necessaries of life.

I fear that hon. Gentlemen opposite are not aware of what is passing in this country. Throughout the great towns, that question of the reduction of expenditure which we have placed before you is exciting the intensest interest; whilst in every meeting of farmers the same cry is echoed. The men who thought us their greatest enemies, are now ready to shake hands with my hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding. They are anxious that the great justice which we advocate should be done to this country, and that you should force upon the Executive Government the greatest possible economy, compatible with the public exigencies. You say, tauntingly, that the Government is about to follow the advice of my hon. Friend. The fact is, that you will make my hon. Friend a most extraordinary man. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth followed the advice of my hon. Friend; and now you say the present Government are about to do so too. And why is this? It is because we live amongst the people—because we have travelled in every county amongst them, and know their feelings and wishes—

because we are identified with their desires, and have been returned to this House by great and free constituencies. It is on this account you find that the measures which my hon. Friend proposes have the sympathy of millions in this country; and I warn you that not many sessions will pass, before you, powerful as you are, will vote for the measure which he recommends.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 11, 1851.

From Hansard.

[On this day, Mr. Disraeli brought forward an Amendment on the motion that the Speaker do leave the Chair, to the effect that in any relief to be granted by the omission or adjustment of taxation, due regard should be paid to the distressed condition of the owners and occupiers of land in the United Kingdom. The Amendment was negatived by 263 to 250.]

I SHALL endeavour, in the observations I intend to offer to the House, to address myself closely to the question brought before us by the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire. I do not think the hon. Gentleman intends by his motion to lead us into a discussion on the various parts of the Budget brought forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; on the contrary, he seems to agree for the most part that this Budget is acceptable to the country, and that it must pass the House. I shall not be tempted to go into the question of the Corn-law to an extent which might be justified by the speeches of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire (Mr. Stafford), and the noble Lord the Member for Colchester (Lord J. Manners).

I must say that those hon. Gentlemen and others do their leaders great damage by the course they take in this and similar discussions. If I understand the object of the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire — taking it from his speeches in this House—I come to the conclusion that the hon. Gentleman is convinced that any project of returning to Protection is the merest delusion; and that he (Mr. Disraeli) knows perfectly well—every man who considers the subject must know—that so long as hon. Gentlemen opposite will have this question of Protection as the main part of their policy, their leaders are destined to sit on the shady side of the House, and could never cross the table and sit on the Ministerial benches. I therefore will advise all those who support the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire to avoid the question of Protection altogether, as one which has been finally and irrevocably settled.

The hon. Gentleman has made this proposition to the House, that the agricultural interest (the labourers, who were once a part of the agricultural interest, are now left out)—that the agricultural interest, consisting of the owners and occupiers of land, have some special claim to some special relief. He has assumed that they are suffering generally, if not universally, throughout the United Kingdom; but he has not brought anything like proof, first of all, that the owners and occupiers of land are suffering much, or, indeed, that they are suffering at all; and, secondly, the

hon. Gentleman has failed, I think, to show that they have any special claim to relief, even if they are suffering.

I admit that the hon. Member has a right to assume the fact of the alleged distress, when arguing with the noble Lord at the head of the Government, because the noble Lord, with that want of caution which not unfrequently distinguishes him, has admitted into the Queen's Speech a paragraph which was a direct invitation to the hon. Member for Buckingham to get up a discussion on this topic in the first week of the session; and then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, committing another blunder, has brought forward a proposition in his first Budget which he ought not to have made, but to which, if he has brought it forward, hon. Gentlemen opposite have a right to expect he will adhere. That paragraph and proposition have caused the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire to get up this interesting discussion on a subject which I had hoped was worn threadbare. Now, I am prepared at once to dispute half their case—that is, that the owners of land are suffering distress, or that they have any claim on such a ground to come to this House for relief.

The hon. Member for Herefordshire (Mr. Booker) said the other night that there had been a fall of rent to the amount of 25 per cent.; but though that hon. Gentleman's oratory may be applauded in Herefordshire, yet I believe that he durst not assert that to be a fact in the face of the farmers of that county. Again, the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire has admitted this night, or rather he has assumed, that the reduction of rent may be taken to be 10 per cent. I do not believe it is 10 per cent. I have never seen a single authenticated case which went beyond 15 per cent. I have found many cases in which no reduction has been made; and where there has been a reduction, it is very often made not by permanent agreement with the landlord, but is merely a temporary remission, precisely such as I have known to be given by landlords on several distinct occasions. I take it for granted, therefore, that the fall of rent is to a very small extent; and that, in point of fact, it is not worth comparing with the losses which those who have property invested in other ways, except in land, are constantly liable to in all parts of the kingdom.

There may be, and I believe there are, cases of difficulty among landowners, and particularly among the landowners in Ireland. There are landowners who have small net incomes and large rent-rolls, and from extravagance and other causes have engaged to give to their creditors, or to annuitants of one kind or another, nine-tenths of their actual rent-roll. Of course a fall of 10 per cent. in such cases is equal to the destruction of the whole income. But this is no fault of free trade or of the free-traders; the Manchester school are not to be blamed for anything of this kind. We have never admired settlements and entails. On the contrary, we should prefer to see landed property free. We have never recommended gentlemen, who cannot afford it, to keep a great house in the country and a great house in town, or that so many packs of hounds and other sources of enjoyment should be maintained. I confess that if I were a landed proprietor—and I am very sorry that I am not—I should feel humiliated if my advocate in this House made such a speech as the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire has made to-night and on former occasions.

Now, let me ask if there is any class that passes so triumphantly through every commercial hurricane and disaster as the class of landed proprietors does? I see that the candidate at Aylesbury has stated, as a proof of the distressed condition of the landed proprietors, that money invested in land only returns 2½ per cent. But that in itself is a proof of the security of the return from land, and that it is not subjected to the vicissitudes to which other property is liable. There are some in this House who

could tell a different tale respecting investments of another character—investments, for instance, in the manufacture of iron during the last four years. They could tell of the extraordinary revulsion which has taken place in that time, consequent on the demand for iron for *railway purposes having declined.* I can speak of my own trade, although I cannot confirm the view taken of it by the noble Lord the Member for Colchester. Yet I can state that a very large portion of that trade during the last five years, when there were three failures in the American cotton crop—that during these years all the coarse departments of the trade have been of the most unprofitable character.

The noble Lord (Lord J. Manners) has read from Mr. Littledale's circular the parts which suited him—not the parts which suited another view of the question—not the statement which that circular contained that the trade appeared to be settled on a solid and sound basis. The noble Lord ought to know that trade has been so good in Yorkshire for the last two years, and the increase in the consumption of wool so great, that the price of wool has become extremely high, and that it is the price of the raw material at this moment which is interfering with profits in Yorkshire. It was only yesterday that I came from the Hatfield station on the Great Northern Railway to London in company with a buyer of wool, who told me that his trade was bad at present; that wool was so dear, and so little of it to be had, that, as a buyer of wool from the farmers, and a seller of it to the Yorkshire manufacturers, he found his trade entirely unprofitable. I gathered from that fact, that the farmers were *enjoying a considerable profit on* their wool, and that it had been a prosperous article for a very long period.

But the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire has made an admission which is worth something. He said he calculated that the landowners, losing ten per cent. of rental, were losing 6,000,000*l.* per annum; but he added that the fall of rent gave them no claim whatever to come to that House for relief. I was very glad to hear that fact asserted by the hon. Member. But then a great number of his followers hold a very different opinion, and I have heard even from the Ministerial benches in former times that *it was necessary to keep up the price* of corn in order to keep up the rent. But if the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire would now look at this fact, that the labouring population are comfortably off, and generally in a state of prosperity—if that prosperity has been caused by the transfer of the 6,000,000*l.* of rent from the landed proprietors, who never ought to have possessed it, if given to them by the Corn-law—if labourers are prosperous by the transfer of that 6,000,000*l.* to them, they are enjoying that of which they have been deprived for thirty-five years by the operation of a law, the repeal of which is so much regretted by some hon. Gentlemen opposite. I deny altogether that the landowners are suffering, or that they are suffering to an extent which requires that they should be pointed out as an ill-used class.

I now come to the question of the occupiers. Now, it is affirmed broadly that the occupiers of land are suffering great distress. I believe that some distress must necessarily arise from the circumstance that the prices of farm produce are temporarily depressed. But this distress is not a rare malady with the occupiers of land. Violent speeches have been made in this House from 1815 onwards, in favour of relief to the distressed occupiers of land. Mr. Preston, a distinguished gentleman connected with the law, wrote a pamphlet two or three years after the Corn-law was enacted, *in which* he showed that the distress of the occupiers was most agonising, and that they had lost 100,000,000*l.* of their capital, which was transferred to other classes. There is nothing to show that any considerable portion of what they suffered now, arose directly or indirectly from the legislation of that House. But, if it

did, what is the remedy proposed, stripped of anything like delusion? The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire does not propose to remedy the grievance by raising the price of corn; but his proposition is this — the making some small transfer of a certain rate, now paid by a certain description of property, to the Consolidated Fund, by which that description of property now paying the rate should henceforth only pay a portion of it, and the rest might be distributed over the tax-payers of the United Kingdom generally.

In connection with the poor-rate there are some facts to which I wish to call the attention of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I will refer to and quote from a return moved for by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Ripon (Sir J. Graham) in 1846, showing the proportions in which this rate has been levied on land, houses, and other property. I am sorry that there is no return down to the present year, because I believe the facts proved by it will be found to be the most conclusive argument against any proposition based upon the assumption that the landed interest suffers unduly from the incidence of the poor-rate. In 1826, it appears the land alone paid 69 per cent. of all the poor-rate. In 1833 the land paid 63 per cent. only. In 1841 it paid 52 per cent. only. Thus, it will be observed, that in the period from 1826 to 1841, being a period of fifteen years, the share which the land alone paid of the whole poor-rate of the country, fell from 69 per cent. to 52 per cent., that is to say, from two-thirds to about one-half of the whole amount. And I think we may fairly take for granted, seeing the fall in those fifteen years, that a return made out to the last year would show that the land is not now paying more than forty per cent. of the whole amount. [Mr. Wilson: 'Forty-five per cent.'] The hon. Member for Westbury suggests that forty-five per cent. will be the correct estimate. Well, let us look at the whole poor-rate levied. In 1833 the whole amount was 8,600,000*l.*; in 1842 the amount had fallen to 6,500,000*l.*; in 1850, last year, it had fallen to 5,395,000*l.* Now, here we have the broad fact, that, within the eight years during which we have had that legislation of which hon. Gentlemen opposite complain, the poor-rate of England and Wales has fallen in amount more than a million sterling. The calculations which I have made in reference to these figures are upon the assumption that the land now paid only 40 per cent., and not 45 per cent., and of course the House will make all allowance for that circumstance. I take the year 1833, and find the land paying 63 per cent., that is to say, 5,434,000*l.*; and then, taking 1850, and assuming the land pays 40 per cent., you will find that in amount the land now pays only 2,158,000*l.* In other words, the land of England and Wales paid, in 1833, double the poor-rate which it paid in 1850.

This is an important element in the question we are now considering. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Herries) shakes his head; but I do not mind that, for the right hon. Gentleman has been in the habit of shaking his head at everything from this side ever since he has entered this House. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say, for example, that the condition of the landed proprietary has not been affected by the hundreds of millions expended on railways in this country, and which now pay 300,000*l.* per annum to the poor-rate on parishes to which they have never contributed a pauper? Does he mean to assert that manufacturing towns and villages could be springing up in every direction, and the moment they spring up be taxed for the poor-rate, without to that extent relieving the land from the burdens to which it has been subjected? If the right hon. Gentleman means this, he certainly could never have been fit for the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. At any rate, these are facts to which I think it not inappropriate to call the attention of the House. But the argument is, that, notwithstanding this dimi-

nution in the poor-rates, the farmers are still distressed. That, after all, is an argument in favour of that view of the question which I and my friends take; our conviction being, that the transference of the rate from the occupying farmer to the occupying householder, by means of taxing his tea or his sugar, will not prove permanently beneficial to the tenant-farmers. For all the reductions in the poor-rate to which I have alluded have not in the slightest degree affected the interest of the tenant-farmers, those cases of course excepted in which the farm has been held continuously at the same rent during those years over which the reductions have extended; and any transference which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) can make, in the event of his obtaining a majority, will have no effect whatever on the tenant-farmer—for if there is any truth in economical science, the tenant-farmer will be compelled in the end to pay an increased rent for the land he holds.

Undoubtedly, however, at this moment the condition of the tenant-farmer is one which every man must regard with sympathy. I defy any one to say, looking to the course which I and my friends have pursued as free-traders in this House, that we have ever manifested any want of sympathy for any one class of the tax-payers of this country. At least there can be no denial of the assertion that we have always advocated diminished expenditure and diminished taxation; and that we have urged a diminution of taxation in that particular direction which would have alike affected all classes, inasmuch as our object has been to remove taxes from articles of general and universal consumption, where the farmer would have obviously benefited not less than the weaver. But the farmers are in an unfortunate position; they are the victims of a vicious system. That, however, is not our system. It is the system of hon. Gentlemen opposite. They created it for their own purposes in 1815, and they maintained it for their own purposes up to 1846. They led the farmers to believe that there could be no path to prosperity but through the county Members and the House of Commons. I, for one, should be very sorry to be connected with any trade or manufacture if I had no reliance but on the Members for Manchester. I should be extremely sorry to entrust my interests either to the impartiality of political parties in this House, or to its intelligence on commercial subjects. The unfortunate position of those among the tenant-farmers who suffer most, consists in this—that they notoriously hold more land than they have capital to cultivate. Their case is precisely the same as that of many landowners, who own extents of land on which they cannot pay all that is due. All this is very sad. If landowners buy land only to obtain political influence, they are on the road to ruin. If a tenant-farmer takes more land than he can properly cultivate in reference to his capital, he is also on the road to ruin.

There are, no doubt, other questions which ought to be considered in speaking of the condition of the tenant-farmer. There is, in particular, one question, in which I took great interest in former years, but the advocacy of which I have been compelled to relinquish in consequence of my not having received that aid from the farmers which their private representations had induced me to expect. I allude to the question of the Game-laws. [Ironical cheers from the Protectionists.] Surely that question is as pertinent to this discussion as the question of lunatic asylums. I mentioned the fact before, and I will again call attention to it, as a most important circumstance, that every witness examined by the Game-laws Committee (and no Member of that Committee would be found to dispute the respectability or credibility of these witnesses) declared that, whenever game was even moderately preserved, greater injury was done to the farmer occupying the land than was inflicted by the whole amount of his general and local taxes. I am satisfied that hon. Gentlemen who

preserve game, who indulge in sporting, have no conception of the evils which their tastes inflict on the community. I should, however, be ashamed of myself if, while advocating the cause of the tenant-farmers in this House, I did not appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite, supposing them to be the true friends of the occupiers of the land, either to alter the Game-laws, which they certainly ought to do, or, if they will not do that, at least to alter their practices, and to discontinue that system which is abhorrent to the civilization of our day, and which, at all events, is most cruelly injurious to those whom hon. Gentlemen opposite profess to represent. [Cries of 'Question!'] I am sorry some hon. Gentlemen do not think that this is speaking to the question. There are those out of doors who do think that it is very near the question.

But what are the remedies for the difficulties of the tenant-farmers? You have your set of remedies. We have our set of remedies. I am free at once to admit that I have no expectation, in passing from the system of the last forty years to that sound system which now prevails, and must henceforth prevail, that we shall find the tenant-farmers, one and all, and immediately, by any kind of contrivance on the part of this House, jumping into a state of unequivocal prosperity. As they now are, they have been before. I heard but yesterday of a farm in Hertfordshire which has had six tenants in eighteen years. Their prosperity was not universal in past years, and it is not now. But if they do get into a better position, it can only be by paths which are very evident; in some cases, by reductions in the rents; in other cases, by increase of produce; and in most cases, by a more successful adaptation of the powers of their farms to the production of those articles which the markets would be most willing to take from them.

There is no doubt whatever that there are great numbers of tenant-farmers who are not complaining, and who have no reason for complaint. And I firmly believe that if all were like the few, and possessed the same energy, the same skill in the adaptation of the resources of their land to the requirements of the markets—above all, if they asserted their independence in making terms with their landlords, they would all overcome their difficulties, and overcome them more speedily, more certainly, and more permanently, than can be looked for from any assistance likely to be extended to them by the House of Commons.

The noble Lord the Member for Colchester (Lord J. Manners) has adverted at some length to the present state of crime. In reference to this, I wish to state to the House some facts to which I desired to call attention the other night, in the discussion on the income-tax, but which are quite applicable on this occasion. Probably these statistics will be consolatory to the noble Lord, who is not wanting in benevolence. I hold in my hand a return of the number of persons taken into custody in Manchester since 1842, the return being for every two years. In 1842, the number was 13,801; and I believe the number was 12,000 in the two years preceding. In 1844, the number fell to 10,700; in 1846, to 7,600; in 1848, to 6,200; in 1849, to 4,600; and in 1850, the number was only 4,578. Thus, in 1850, not one-third of the number of persons were taken into custody in Manchester who were found to have been taken into custody in the year 1842. If we take the general facts as to England and Wales (not taking last year into account, as to which there is no return), we shall find a great reduction of committals from 1842 down to 1849. The diminution was from 31,000 to 27,000; and thus, although the population has increased ten per cent., the committals have decreased not less than 12½ per cent.

I have now stated, in detail, what I regard as the reasons why the proposition of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) would be of no value if it were agreed to. It can only serve to delude—not the owners of the land, for they understand all these tricks—but the occupying

lightly of any of them. Probably under no conceivable circumstances can it be expected that there should not be somewhat more dependence between the occupiers and the owners of land than there is between some other classes in society; but it is of the utmost consequence that a system like this—which wars against the prosperity of the farmers, which blights all their hopes, and makes it utterly impossible that their industry should procure its reward—it is, I say, of the utmost possible consequence that there should be men who dare speak out, and that when such individuals are found they should receive honour, and be repaid with the gratitude of their brother farmers in every part of the kingdom.

We have heard a good deal within the last year or two of farmers' friends; but I take it that Mr. Horncastle is a true farmers' friend; and, if it were not that fortunate circumstances have made him in some degree independent of those who would be likely to injure him, he would not only be the farmers' friend, but he would be likely to become a martyr for farmers. I am delighted to see this meeting, because I take it to be a sign of the times, and a sign of better times—an evidence that farmers are about to think, act, and do something for themselves. I conceive there is no delusion so great as that of believing that the great and the mighty of the earth will ever be the true, sincere, and disinterested friends of the middle classes, either in this or any other kingdom.

I have heard men say that there is no spirit amongst farmers. I never believed that statement. I have felt that there has always been spirit, but that it has been slumbering. It has not been dead, but it has been less active on account of many circumstances; but circumstances may arise, and now I believe have arisen, to make that spirit appear not only existent, but to show it active, resolute, and determined.

The real object of this meeting is to give an expression to the opinions of the farmers in this district with respect to what is now commonly called the game nuisance. It is a protest against a mischievous and unjust system. The time will come, and that too before the children of some now present are as old as we are, when people will look back with astonishment at what farmers have suffered in connection with this question of game. Look at the position in which you now stand. The landowner lets his land, and the farmer, a capitalist to some amount, takes it. Well, everybody who is not acquainted with the circumstances of this country, and who is not puzzled with the extraordinary things he sees round him, would suppose that, when the landowner lets his land, he gave up its ownership during the term for which it was let. That is, he lets the land to the tenant, the tenant having the right to possess fully all the produce of the land, and the whole of the animals and stock which live upon it. Now, look at the position of the farmer when he takes his farm. It is said he himself makes half his bargain; he is uncommonly fortunate if he does so. Is it not notorious that in every county of Great Britain there is, and has been for years past, a competition for land so fierce that nearly all the bargain is in the hands of the landlord? The effect of this competition is to bid up rent to the very highest point at which it can be hoped to be paid, and to bear down every covenant and right which, under other circumstances, the farmer might reasonably expect to be granted to him for the preservation of his interests.

Now, the farmer gets possession of his land; it becomes the centre of the hopes of himself and his family; his capital is more or less invested in it—some sunk in permanent improvements, and some in the stock, implements, and materials upon the surface of the farm. He hopes that it may turn out well for him; he gets up early, works hard and late—thousands of farmers with their hands, and thousands more with their heads. He gives his skill, industry, and perseverance to the soil; he is subject

to the vicissitudes of seasons, against which no human foresight can altogether prevail, and he stands the chance and hazard of the markets. He has to contend also against the effect of the ignorance of landowning legislators, in which ignorance, unfortunately for him, there are no vicissitudes. The result is but a very moderate compensation for his expenditure and labour, and that compensation is in many cases altogether destroyed, and in very many more cases much lessened, by a system which does no good to any human being whatever, which exists solely for the amusement of the rich and powerful class at the expense of the interests of the tenantry and peasantry, and at a very great and enormous sacrifice to the whole community. There can be no success to the farmer under a system of game-preserving.

In moving for a committee in the House of Commons, two or three weeks ago, I brought forward cases which were laughed at in that assembly, and which I was told were not true. I did not bring before them my worst cases, for I was afraid that had I done so they would not have believed them; but, now we have obtained that committee, I will produce cases infinitely worse than the very worst of those I then cited. I shall call before them farmers, who will prove, on oath were it necessary—which it is not before a committee of the House of Commons—that they had sacrificed at least 500*l.* a-year for a succession of years. I can bring forward a tenant who can show that for a number of years he has expended 1,000*l.* annually in the purchase of artificial manure, and yet so completely was his farm ravaged by game that he found it useless to toil and sacrifice his capital and to farm in this manner, and he therefore discontinued this large purchase of artificial manure, and thus to a very great extent diminished the employment of labourers, and consequently lessened their chance of a fair remuneration in the parish in which that farm was situate.

By this system of game-preserving the landlords are made the greatest enemies of a class in whose real well-being they have the truest and greatest interest; for of all men in the world the landlord is the most interested in having his tenants contented and prosperous: not only because he lives among them, occasionally meets them, and hears from and about them, but because his own pocket interest is involved in it, if he could but see it in its true light; for where you find the tenants most prosperous, enlightened, and satisfied, there you find the soil best cultivated, the amount of its produce the greatest, poor-rates the lowest, and rent invariably highest, and paid with the greatest certainty and security. But the landlords take extraordinary means to make their farmers suspect them. I maintain that there is not, and never has been since the time when man first peopled this earth, if history may be relied on, any race of beings so unsuspecting and confiding as the tenantry of this country. During the last year the landlords have been asking the farmers—nay, in some cases threatening to compel them—to employ more labourers. A landed proprietor, a Member of the House of Commons, told me only a week ago, when discussing this very question, that he *forced* all his tenants to employ a certain amount of labour upon each of his farms. If a man preserves game, refuses security of tenure, talks all sorts of nonsense to his tenants if ever he gets them round him, and discourses about everything but their real grievances and the true way by which a man can become prosperous, and then, when he finds that some labourers are not employed, and that there are not sufficient means for the farmer whereby he can pay a high rent and a high rate of wages also—if he comes and forces them by covenants in their leases, that they shall employ an amount of labour over and above that which they would otherwise be willing to employ—I say that all this introduces a system which is most destructive to the interests of

the landowners themselves, and most degrading and ruinous to the independence and interests of the tenantry. Capital must yield profit, or labour will not thrive. Men do not take farms merely for the pleasure of paying rents or employing labourers. I am a manufacturer in a considerable way of business, but I never professed to keep on my manufactory for the benefit of my work-people, or for the sake of clothing my customers. My object is, by the expenditure of capital and by giving labour to a business, to procure for myself and family a comfortable income, with a hope of realising something like a competency at a late period of my life. I apprehend that the tenant-farmer takes his farm with a precisely similar view; and yet I am convinced that there is no class of capitalists in this country who, for the last thirty years, have obtained so small a return for the amount of capital and labour they have employed as have the cultivators of the soil.

If the landowners are interested in the well-being of their tenantry, the tenantry are also interested in the prosperity of the labourers. I have been in some of the northern parts of this kingdom, where I have seen a very different condition of the agricultural labourers from that which is to be noticed in the southern counties: a state in which the labourers seem to be interested in the success of the farmer and the prosperity of the soil. The same condition might exist all over the kingdom. Get rid of this infamous trifling with the interests of the farmer; do not let the amusements of a small class be put in competition not only with the prosperity, but with the very existence of a much larger class. Let us, if possible—I say '*us*,' for, although I am not a farmer, I am deeply interested, as every man must be, in the prosperity of agriculture—I say, let us get a system of farming, of agreements, of management, from one end of it to the other, placed on some intelligible, rational, business-like footing, and then we shall have landowners respected because they are just, and tenants independent because they are prosperous.

I have said that by this system the amusements of the rich are put in the balance, and actually weigh down considerations of much greater importance —the prosperity of farmers, the well-being of the labourers, and the true interests of the community. Who does not know that from 1838 to 1842 we had, for nearly five years, harvests which were under the average; that the consequence was great scarcity of provisions, with very high prices? Some men may think that this is a very desirable state of things. I will not argue for a moment with any individual who maintains that scarcity can be beneficial either for individuals or nations. During that period we had an importation from abroad to a considerable extent, such as the law allowed; but we had at the same time millions of heads of game of every description—game which, in a country densely peopled like this, must soon come to be considered as vermin; and yet there they were throughout the whole of that period devouring probably as large a quantity of the produce of the soil of England as the whole amount that we imported from abroad.

The community, then, have a claim upon the landowners, if not upon the tenant-farmers. They have made themselves by law, though we are not here to discuss that law, and we should very likely greatly differ, and you might not agree with us, on that question; but they have made themselves the purveyors-general—that is, they supply the food, or profess to do so—for the 27,000,000 of people who inhabit Great Britain and Ireland. If they do thus think it desirable for State purposes that the population should be restricted to the food they are willing to supply them with, they are not to deem it unreasonable if some portion of the population, who sometimes do not get enough, should ask them why it is that while they maintain this system of restriction they also maintain a practice

by which a large portion of the produce is devoured by game kept solely for their own amusement? I believe—indeed, I know—that at the end of last session, when I gave notice of my intention to bring forward this question of the Game-laws in Parliament, it was thought to be rather an odd and somewhat impertinent meddling with a matter not precisely within my province.

I remember, when I read the notice that I should move the House upon the subject at the commencement of the present session, that there was a little titter, a little derisive laughter from the opposite side of the House. The landowners were not well acquainted with the condition of the farmers, or the state of the country in which they live. I believe they do not know much about the mischief which game does to their tenants and themselves. I think I may venture to say that I know more about the state of the tenantry of this country than the majority of those to whom the tenants pay their rents. When this case was brought forward, unless my statements could have been altogether denied, it was utterly impossible for the House to refuse the committee. There were the cases of damage well authenticated—injury to the tenant, destruction to the allotments of the labourers, the insolence, depredations, and irritation caused by gamekeepers, the demoralization of the labourers, the thousands in gaol, the hundreds transported, and the scores murdered—the House of Commons would have been infinitely worse than its greatest calumniator or enemy has ever dared to brand it, had it refused the investigation which I demanded, founded upon the cases which I was then able to submit to it.

The committee which has been appointed, I believe, will be a tolerably fair one. I chose seven of its members myself, and the Government selected the remaining eight. I am bound to acknowledge that throughout the whole of this matter Ministers have behaved in the most honourable and handsome manner; that there was not the slightest objection to any one person proposed by me as a member of that committee: and I believe that, if the Government had dared to have done it, they would have put upon it from their side of the House men more favourable to the interests of the tenantry than those who were eventually placed there. We are about to meet next week, for the first time, for evidence. I have had an amount of correspondence which it is almost impossible to get through. I have written for the last fortnight or three weeks not unfrequently from thirty to fifty letters a-day, nearly all of which have been to persons connected, more or less, with the cultivation of the soil, and having reference to the question of game. I have here a large number of names of persons who will come up and give evidence before the committee. I do not think the other party will call many witnesses; for he would be a very bold man who would come up and say that game-preserving was advantageous, or not positively injurious, to agriculture. They will probably content themselves by cross-examining the witnesses that we shall bring up. But what we want is specific and accurate statements of damage, and opinions formed upon experience of the past, by men who have had the best possible opportunities of judging.

I do hope, when this evidence is brought out to the public, as it will be before or about the close of this session, that we shall then have this grievous abuse fairly exposed; and when that is once done we may be certain that there is no man out of Bedlam, no individual who does not wish to bring down upon himself the ridicule or, what is worse, the execration of the public, will ever say another word in favour of this grievance of preserving game, which has been practised for so many years past by a great portion of the landed proprietors in most parts of the kingdom. But what I want is, that farmers everywhere should seriously consider their position. There are farmers who yet

believe that I am their enemy, inasmuch as I have been prominently connected with the agitation of another question. It may be that those farmers are right, and that I am wrong. I believe they are honest; I am quite sure that I am. Upon that question we must agree to differ until one or the other be converted. I trust that all discussion upon it may be carried on in a rational and kindly spirit, such as becomes men who wish only for the truth, and then I believe the time cannot be far distant when that which is true will be discovered, and not only discovered, but established.

But upon this question of game ninety-nine farmers out of every hundred would shake hands and agree with me entirely. I had a letter from Wiltshire the other day, from a gentleman connected very closely with farmers, and whose family are all similarly situated. He says, 'Your name is a household word with the farmers in this district; and they literally swear by you!' If we agree upon this point we will work harmoniously; we will go together as far as we can, and do all the good we can in company. I wish the farmers in this county—and there are some who are well able to do it—would put themselves still more in communication with me upon this question. Let us have from every county where game-preserving has been carried to any serious extent, a body of witnesses who shall for ever settle the question, as respects the particular county. It is not sufficient that I should prove that game-preserving has done alarming mischief in Suffolk or in Wiltshire, for to prove that there is a local malady would not perhaps justify Parliament in applying that which may be termed a general remedy; but what I want is to bring out as much as possible the truth from every county where this nuisance has been oppressive. They should come up now before the committee, and that will be infinitely better than petitioning Parliament. Let them come up now and state before the committee what they know and what they have seen, and you may rely upon it, such is the intelligence and determination in the public mind of England, that when an abuse is fairly exposed and brought out to demonstration so that nobody can deny that it is an abuse, the time is near at hand when Parliament will be forced to abate it.

It will be a fine thing for this country when farmers lose a little bit of that overweening confidence they have in the farmers' friends. I would not to-night say a syllable against any landed proprietor—I believe in my conscience that many of their errors are errors of judgment and not of heart. I believe that they have been living amongst circumstances the most unfavourable to a discovery of what is their true interests; and their ignorance of their own affairs has made them most officious in offering advice, which was wholly valueless to their tenants when assembled at dinners and meetings of various kinds. What I want farmers to do henceforth is this, to take nothing upon credit. I would not take anything for granted. Do not believe anything that I say, or which my friend Mr. Cobden may utter; do not, for a moment, think it worth anything, until you have reasoned it out and examined the facts, and made yourselves sure. But apply the same rule to the landowners. I want you to apply it to all. Candidates come before you at the hustings, and they pledge themselves to all sorts of impossible things. It is notorious that half the things which men say they will do when they go to Parliament, that assembly has no more power to perform than it has to prevent the sun rising to-morrow. These men come, and they promise a variety of impossible things; they go to Parliament and cannot perform them, and then those who sent them there are disappointed, and fancy they are betrayed.

If the tenantry of this country, powerful as they are now in numbers on the county registers, would look a little to their own rank, and not quite so much to another rank and order, they would

find more real attention to their true interests on behalf of county representatives than they do at present. I bought the *Times* newspaper at the station as I was coming down, and I find a paragraph in it which may be worth reading. It is extracted from the *Western Times*, a Devonshire paper. It states—

'A requisition is actually determined on, to invite three eminent renting farmers to stand as candidates for the next Parliamentary election. The farmers of Devon are determined to have men who pay rent to look after their interests in the House of Commons. We do not anticipate much immediate success from such a step, but it will teach the aristocracy a lesson, and open the eyes of the tenant-farmers to their power, if they choose to act in concert.'

How would it be if a tenant-farmer were to put up for some county? In my neighbourhood there used to be a little jealousy about manufacturers. They had a notion that nobody should go to Parliament but a man who had no other occupation to fill up his time, and who had moreover a great deal of money to bear the expense of a life in London, which was supposed to be enormous. But now they have found out their mistake, and they take a man here and another there, who is not a lord, and whose ancestors we do not know exactly what they were, but a man who has common sense and common honesty—which two things I suppose are called 'common' for the very reason that they are so rarely to be met with.

We have heard frequently—I have read repeatedly, at the proceedings of agricultural meetings of various kinds—that the toast has been proposed of 'agriculture and commerce' by men who despise commerce but yet sell game—they have had the audacity to toast commerce and agriculture together. There is and ought ever to be a real union between these two great branches, by which nations subsist, but heretofore it has been only nominal, and never real: legislation has prevented its being so, for legislation has been foolish in commerce as it has been in agriculture. Speeches made at meetings such as I have referred to have also had the effect of making this union unreal. I hope that to-night is the beginning of a new era. No man here will believe for a moment that I can have personally the smallest interest in injuring any individual in this country who is the possessor or the cultivator of a single acre of its soil. There never can be prosperity in any country while all the numerous cultivators of the soil are permanently depressed and injured; there can be no doubt that under all circumstances the vast bulk of the subsistence of our people must be derived from our own soil, and from the direct labour, as cultivators, of a vast portion of our own countrymen.

There can be no doubt whatever that any law passed in Parliament for any particular benefit of commerce, unless it be a just law,—and being just, which can be permanent,—must be injurious to the prosperity of agriculture itself. In the county from which I come, Lancashire, the most prominent in the world for manufactures and commerce, there is at this time a condition of prosperity, when contrasted with what we saw three years ago, so remarkable that it appears to be nothing less than a miracle. I say it is that miracle which we see every day, and yet are unobservant of it: the miracle that the sun shines, and that the showers fall in due season, the earth is prolific, and the great and bountiful Benefactor of our species gives abundance to the people; and that abundance having come for two or three years in succession, the prostrate millions of working-men who were idle and pauperised are now standing erect, and are employed, and well paid, and independent, as much so as I have ever seen them at any former period. Whilst I see that with this abundance there is that prosperity in the most numerous classes of the people, I cannot for a moment suppose that the prosperity of a nation can in any degree depend upon the foolish fallacies which

word as to the question between North and South in the United States. My opinion is that the unanimous judgment of the people of England, so far as that is ever shown upon any public question, is in favour of the course which her Majesty's Government have publicly declared it to be their intention to pursue. I believe that my hon. Friend is mistaken in the view he takes of the meaning of the result of what he calls a recognition of the South. I have seen it stated by authority, North as well as South, and by authority which I may term English, and by authority from France, that in the present condition of that quarrel, recognition, by all the usages of nations, must necessarily lead to something more. And, therefore, although there were no question of slavery, even though it were simply a political revolt, and though there were no special moral question connected with it, I believe, looking to the past usage of this country with regard to the rebellion of the Greeks against Turkey, and with regard to the revolt of the colonies of South America against Spain, that it can be demonstrated that these cases afford no support whatever to the argument that we are permitted now to recognise the South, and that if such recognition did take place now, it could only exasperate still more the terrible strife which exists on the North American continent, and would spread that strife even to Europe itself.

I am myself of opinion, as I have been from the first, that the people of America—so numerous, so powerful, so instructed, so capable in every way—will settle the difficulties of that continent without asking the old countries of Europe to take any share in them. I believe that in the providence of the Supreme, the slaveholder—untaught, unteachable by fact or argument, or Christian precept—has been permitted to commit—I will not call it the crime—but the act of suicide. Whether President Lincoln be in favour of abolition; whether the Northerners are unanimous against slavery; whatever may be said or thought with regard to the transactions on that continent, he must be deaf and blind—and worse than deaf and blind—who does not perceive that, through the instrumentality of this strife, that most odious and most indescribable offence against man and against heaven—the slavery of man, the bondage of four millions of our fellow-creatures—is coming to a certain and rapid end.

Sir, I will say of this question that I look forward to the time when I shall stand on this platform with my honourable Colleague, and when he will join with me—for he is honest enough and frank enough to do that—when he will join with me in rejoicing that there does not breathe a slave on the North American Continent, and that the Union has been completely restored. And not only so, but he will rejoice that England did not in the remotest manner, by a word or a breath, or the raising of a finger, or the setting of a type, do one single thing to promote the atrocious object of the leaders of this accursed insurrection.

Now, Sir, I must ask you to listen to me for a little on matters less exciting—and our friends down below here who are enduring a sort of purgatory,—I must ask them to be as compassionate to me as they can, and I will commiserate them as much as possible. About two months ago, on the twenty-fourth of November, I had the opportunity of making a speech in the town of Rochdale, where I live. The meeting was, I suppose, nearly as large as this. It was called for the purpose of affording an opportunity to our distinguished representative, Mr. Cobden, to address his constituents. There are very few meetings of that kind at Rochdale to which I am not invited, and in which I am not expected to take part. On that occasion I took the opportunity of objecting to those persons who think that everything is done in this country that needs to be done—that everybody is so happy that politics are at an end.

I spoke particularly of the question of the million or million and a half of our labouring population who are employed in cultivating the soil. I need not tell you that from that time to this there has been rather a lively discussion in the newspapers about what was said at that meeting.

I have had no opportunity of speaking since, and I have not thought it necessary to write anything on the matter, but if you will give me your attention for a short time I should like to say a little about it. What I said at that meeting on the subject of the land was this:—

'I should say, if we were fairly represented, that feudalism, with regard to the land of England, would perish, and that the agricultural labourer throughout the United Kingdom would be redeemed from that poverty and serfdom which, up to this time, have been his lot. It would take a night, it would take a long speech, to go into the question of the condition of that unfortunate class; but with laws such as we have, which are intended to bring vast tracks of land into the possession of one man, that one man may exercise great political power, that system is a curse to the country, and dooms the agricultural labourer, I say, to perpetual poverty and degradation.'

There were comments on that speech, but I will only refer to the comments of one paper, the *Times*. The *Times*, in an article upon foreign politics, and speaking of small States in Europe who may have something to gain by change, said that they might look upon these changes with something of that satisfaction with which the poor might regard Mr. Bright's proposition for the division among them of the lands of the rich. Well, you know that a correspondence took place almost immediately, and in consequence of that passage, between my friend Mr. Cobden and Mr. John Delane, the editor of the *Times*. Now, this is what the *Times* had said, that I am now about to read, two days after the speech:—

'This language'—

that is, the language of Mr. Cobden; and yet my language, I am free to say, was more strong upon the general question, I think, than Mr. Cobden's—

'so often repeated and so often calculated to excite discontent among the poor and half-informed, has really only one intelligible meaning. "Reduce the electoral franchise; for when you have done so you will obtain an assembly which will seize on the estates of proprietors of land and divide them gratuitously among the poor."'

Well, Sir, when this notable newspaper editor was brought to book, what did he say? On the same day he wrote a letter to Mr. Cobden, the 18th December, and also published an article in his newspaper. In his letter he says: 'You seem to assume that I charged you with proposing that this division should be accomplished by violence.' Does anybody believe that any one without violence can seize upon the lands of the rich, and distribute them gratuitously, that is, for nothing, amongst the poor? On the same day, in an article, he made this statement:—

'Nobody was likely to charge those two gentlemen with recommending "agrarian" outrages, for their interest is as much bound up with social order, the rights of property, and the Queen's peace as that of the whole peerage.'

Which is true; but why did not he find that out before he had made that charge? He says,—

'Nobody who read the single line which Mr. Cobden has seized for a peg to hang his defence upon could imagine for a moment that it pointed to violence.'

This is the gentleman who professes to counsel and lead the nation. Now, suppose he had charged Adam Smith, the great apostle of political economy, with approving piracy, or if he had charged John Wesley with being an encourager of drunkenness and pro-

fanity, would it have been more extraordinary than that he should charge Mr. Cobden and myself with instigating agrarian outrages and the seizure of the estates of those who now hold them, for the purpose of dividing them among the people, of course taking nothing from the people for them, and therefore giving nothing to the rich for them? If there be two men in England, I will undertake to say, who have more conscientiously and more faithfully preached for twenty-five years the doctrines of absolute honesty with regard to political questions in England, those two men are Mr. Cobden and myself. But Mr. Cobden came forward to assail Mr. Delane when he made this charge against me. He found a man in a mask endeavouring to stab me in the back,—for he had not seen that the same man had been, in a previous article, also stabbing him,—and he came forward, and dragged his mask from him, and he showed him to the gaze of the whole nation and of the world. And at last, after denial and equivocation of every kind, this unmasked editor of this great journal was obliged to retire from the personal part of this controversy, and to skulk back into his anonymous hiding-place, which suits him better.

I will tell you how it was. Neither Mr. Cobden nor I have ever said anything to show that we thought it desirable to abolish by force of law anonymous writing in our newspapers; but Mr. Cobden laments, as I do, and as you all do, that the anonymous system is inevitably a shelter for a man who has no sense of honour. I recollect a description which I am sure will suit Mr. Delane admirably. It was published some time ago in the city of New York, and described a notorious politician there who, if I am not mistaken, has been at the elbow of the New York correspondent of the *Times* for the last twelve months—with what happy success to the forecast and the honesty of that paper we all know. It was said of him that 'he was a just man and a righteous man, and that he walked uprightly *before the world*, but when he was *not* before the world his walk was slantindicular.' Sir, the *Times* newspaper, notwithstanding all this, is a power in this country, and a power in Europe. No man laments more than I do that so much power should be associated with what I will call a godless intellect and a practical atheism. No one laments more than I do that a paper which was once great in its independence has become now—what shall I say?—domesticated, for the editor of the *Times* is now domesticated in the houses of Cabinet Ministers and members of high families in London. He has learned now,—in this day, when that paper might have been more useful than ever,—to fetch and carry for Cambridge House. And, Sir, for aught I know, looking at what is said in the clubs in London about the dispensation of patronage to men who have been writers for that journal, I am not sure, unless what I say now may make it difficult, that some day or other some proprietor (or chief proprietor) of that paper may not find himself placed in the House of Peers as compensation for the services offered to the present Prime Minister of England.

But now, passing from that subject, you will remember that my argument at Rochdale was that the agricultural labouring population of this country were in a deplorable condition, and that I believed that to a large extent it was to be attributed to the unsound and unjust laws which regulate the possession and distribution of land. Now you know, of course, living in Birmingham, as well as we know, that, contrary to what exists in some countries, we have three great classes connected with land. We have the landowner first, who is always becoming richer—that is if he does not spend too much. His land is always becoming more valuable. You find him living in a better house, with more gorgeous fittings, with a more splendid equipage, and following more expensive amusements. [A Voice: 'I

thought the cotton lords did that.'] No doubt. If you pursue it further, you find the tenant-farmers occupying larger farms, and in connection with the tenant-farmers there is a much greater apparent wealth. But if you come to the labourers, who cultivate the land, by whose toil and whose sweat your tables are furnished with bread and with beef, and with many other things that they produce, you find these labourers at this moment, I believe, at a comparatively greater distance from the landlord, and from the tenant probably, than they were at any former period. ['No, no.'] There is a gentleman present who differs from me; I am glad he is in the meeting.

I will ask you whether, during past years, you have read any letters in the *Times* newspaper signed by the initials 'S. G. O.' These letters were written by a gentleman of rare intelligence and of great benevolence. His descriptions I believe may be entirely relied upon. If any of you have read some letters written three or four months ago from parts of Buckinghamshire and published in the *Star* newspaper, with regard to the condition of that population,—you will know what it is that I mean,—but if you are unwilling to take their evidence, let us take the evidence of a witness that nobody here will call in question, and that is the evidence of the *Saturday Review*. On the 26th of September last there was an article in that journal on 'Agricultural Labourers,' in which it said—and I beg you to listen to it, for, in point of fact, it is the great part of my speech. The extract from the article reads thus:—

'When the dull season of the year comes round [it is between October and the meeting of Parliament] all sorts of odd persons and things have their share of public attention, and even agricultural labourers are pitied and discussed. At other times they live on with no one much to care for them—the farmer looking on them as his natural enemies, the parson's kindly soul getting weary of his long combat with their helpless stolid ignorance, and the squire not knowing what he can do for them further than build two or three Elizabethan cottages, covered with honeysuckle, close to his gates.'

And then the writer of the article proceeds to say that when foreigners come here and read of the condition of agricultural labourers they must be much shocked, for he adds:—

'We are moved to a languid shame and sadness by thinking how true the picture is, and what *wretched, uncared-for, untaught brutes* the people are who raise the crops on which we live.'

And then:—

'There is a wailing over the dirt and vice and misery that must prevail in houses where seven or eight persons, of both sexes and all ages, are penned up together for the night in the one rickety, foul, vermin-haunted bedroom. The picture of agricultural life unrolls itself before us as it is painted by those who know it best. We see the dull clouded mind, the bovine gaze, the brutality and recklessness, the simple audacity of vice, the confused hatred of his betters, which mark the English peasant, unless some happy fortune has saved him from the general lot, and persuaded him that life "has something besides beer that the poor man may have and may relish."'

He then goes on to declare that 'the old feudalism'—feudalism is precisely the thing I mentioned—

'The old feudalism of England—the state of things when there yet were serfs, and when the lords of the soil were almost a different order of beings—still colours the relations of the rich and the poor.'

And perhaps you would like to know what he says an agricultural labourer should be. The writer states:—

'It is looked on as the duty and place of the poor man to stay in his native village for ever; to work hard for ten or

came to the abolition of the law and custom of primogeniture, that is, by the enactment of a law that property should be equally divided whenever the parents did not leave a will, it is said by his biographer that these laws—

'*Have not merely altered the distribution of that part of the landed property which is transmitted to surviving relatives by the silent operation of law, but they have also operated on public opinion so as to influence the testamentary disposition of it by the proprietors, without which last effect the purpose of the Legislature might have been readily defeated. The cases are now very rare in which a parent makes, by his will, a much more unequal distribution of his property among his children than the law itself would make. It is thus that laws, themselves the creatures of public opinion, often powerfully re-act on it.*'

And he goes on to show that the effect of the distribution was to lessen the chances of a man being so enormously rich, and to give an opportunity to a large number to become moderately so. He said further, that if there were fewer coaches and six in the State of Virginia, there were twenty times as many carriages and pairs.

I have thus briefly touched upon the question of primogeniture. The question of entails is much of the same kind, and with regard to its effect upon the public I shall only say a sentence or two. The object of entailing land is to keep great estates together, and to keep them in one family. Upon this system land in this country is sometimes tied up for fifty, or eighty, or a hundred years, no person having power to sell it, however advantageous it might be to the proprietors that the land should be sold. And then, if you come to the question of the difficulties of transfer, I might ask gentlemen near me connected with the law—and they will tell you that it always takes months, and it sometimes takes years, to prove a title; and the cost of this in money comes to no inconsiderable portion of the purchase money of the property.

Now, may I ask you what is the political reason for which this state of things is maintained? It is for the very reason for which this system was established eight hundred years ago—that there may be in this country a handful of persons, three or four times as many as there are here—twice as many perhaps—who are the owners of nearly all the land, in whose hand is concentrated nearly all the power, by whom the Government of the country is mainly conducted, and amongst whom the patronage of the Government is mainly distributed. In every country in the world, as far as I know, the possessors of land are the possessors of power. In France, at this moment, we all know perfectly well that, notwithstanding there may be a revolution now and then in the streets of Paris, if you come to the question of voting, the majority of the voting population at this moment are found in the number of the proprietors of the land. Ten or twelve years ago it was their suffrages which conferred the supreme power on the present Emperor of the French. If you go across the Atlantic, and study the political system of the United States, where almost all the farmers are owners of their farms, you will find that they are the holders of political power. The city of New York may denounce the policy of the Government at Washington; but it is the land-owning farmers—the cultivators of the great States in the interior of the country—who are the real holders of political power, and by whose will alone the President of the United States is able to carry on the great matters which belong to his exalted station. It is the same in the Southern States, for the great planting population—the owners of immense plantations—are the life and soul of Southern politics. And if you come to our own country—to your own county, Warwickshire, or any county you choose to walk into—you will find that two or three great landowners can sit down

together and determine who shall or who shall not go to Parliament, as the pretended representative of the population in that county.

I believe that with these vast properties, which are of no real advantage to those who hold them—for 100,000*l*. a-year, or 200,000*l*. a-year, can give no man greater real happiness than 10,000*l*. or 5,000*l*. a-year,—I say these great properties, with great political power, form what we call our great territorial system—a system which prevails to an extent in this country which is probably unknown in any other, but which leaves the cultivator of the soil ignorant, and hopeless, and dependent, and degraded. There is, as you know, a great tendency to increase the size of farms throughout the country, a practice which makes it still more difficult for the labourer ever to become a tenant, or to rise from the condition in which he is. You see a ladder—the social ladder—upon which you wish to see the poor, and depressed, and unfortunate nine-or-ten-shillings-a-week-labourer ascend gradually. You would rejoice to see him get up a few steps and become a farmer, although but in a small way; or the owner of a small piece of land. But you find that for six or eight, or ten feet up the ladder, the steps are broken out; and, in his low position, he has not a chance of beginning the ascent. Let there be steps in the shape of small farms and small estates, and land freely bought and sold, and then he will have something to hope for, something to save even his small earnings for, that he may be enabled to purchase or to occupy one of these small farms and get away from the humble and melancholy position in which he is now, to one which I wish, from my soul, every labourer in this country could find himself placed in.

Now, Sir, for fear that the Man in the Mask—he has got his mask on again for a time—for fear that the Man in the Mask should misrepresent me to-morrow, let me tell you that I am not against great estates, or great farms, or great factories, but I have a very great liking for small estates, small farms, and small factories. In this country, where there is such a rapid creation of wealth, there is always a great power urging to the accumulation of land. I know the case of a nobleman now, in a southern county, from report, who is stated to have an income of 120,000*l*. a-year; and being a wise man, as regards his expenditure compared with his income, he only spends—though it is a mystery to me how he spends it—he only spends 40,000*l*. a-year, and he has 80,000*l*. a-year left. What does he do with this? He buys up every farm, every estate, big or little, all over the district, and the consequence is that his immense estate is constantly becoming larger. I do not blame him for that. I applaud him so far, that he is a man who does not waste his property, and I have heard that among those with whom he lives he is a man of excellent character. There are persons who come from Manchester, from Leeds, and there are some in Birmingham who are able to purchase large estates. There is a tendency to this in this country, where we have so much manufacturing and commercial industry, and wealth to buy estates with. In addition to this, their possession gives great social position and great political influence. I am not complaining of this. It is a natural, and advantageous, and healthy thing; for it is desirable that farmers should have the stimulus of ambition to have a larger farm, and that the men who have an estate should have an ambition—if they can entertain it honestly—to have a larger estate. The stimulus by which men strive at something honourable is useful to the country; but at the same time, to add to this the force of a most intricate and complicated system of law, to give to this force greater force, is, in my opinion, contrary to all the true interests of England; and I believe if it goes on for another half-century, as it has for the last half-century, it will cause great discontent and great embarrassment within this now peaceful kingdom.

What I propose is this—it is nothing that I have not stated before—it is the most moderate thing that can be proposed. If you want to see an admirable description of what I think it would be wise to do, you will find it in a paper which certainly is not very Radical—is rather, in my opinion, though conducted with considerable ability, conceited in some of its criticisms upon us—I mean the *Spectator*. There was an article on Saturday last in this paper on the subject of land laws in New York, and although there are only three or four lines about New York in the article, that does not matter, for it is admirably written. In one place it reads as follows:—'No doubt Mr. Bright would consider this not sufficient change for the purposes he wishes.' He is quite mistaken. The changes which he proposes are more extensive than any changes I have ever proposed, either in public or in private. What are these changes? First of all, that the law shall declare that when any person owning property dies without making a distribution of it by will, the law shall distribute it upon the same principle that it now adopts when it divides—I am now speaking of landed property—any other kind of property. For example: Suppose a man has got money in the bank—I wish everybody had—suppose he has machinery in his mill, merchandise in his warehouse, ships upon the ocean, or that he has shares, or the parchments for them in his safe—if he dies, the Government by the law, or rather the law itself, makes a distribution of all that property amongst all his children, in accordance with the great universal law of natural parental affection and justice. Then, I say, let that principle be extended to all the property which a man may die possessed of; and, so far as that goes, I want no further change. Then, with regard to the question of entails, I would say this: the *Spectator* proposes that a man, by entailing his property—so far as I can understand—shall only prevent himself and his next heir from disposing of it—that there shall be, in point of fact, only two persons in the entail. Now, what I propose is, that a man may leave his property to as many persons as he likes, to A, B, C, D, and E and F, and so on all through the alphabet, if they are all alive at the time he makes his will, and he can put all their names into it. But at present he can leave it to these people, and to a child then unborn, and who shall not be born, it may be, till twenty years after he has made his will. I would cut that off. I contend that it should be left to persons who are in existence, and whose names are in the will, and you will find that as A, B, and C died it would finally come into the hands of a man who would have the absolute disposal of, and who could keep, or sell, or give, or waste it as he pleased.

And I believe it will be much better for the public when that freedom of transfer is given to the possessors of land which is given to the possessors of every other kind of property. If I were to sit down for ten minutes and a lawyer were to take my place, he could tell you what a trouble our law is; and—although I am sorry that some of them think that they make a good thing out of it—what a curse it is to a man who buys landed property or who sells it. Everything which I am proposing is carried out, I believe, through most of the States in the American Union, and to a greater extent on the Continent of Europe, and is being adopted in the Australian colonies. It is the most curious thing in the world, that whenever an Englishman leaves these shores—whether it is the effect of the salt air, or of sea-sickness, or the result of that prolonged meditation which a voyage of some weeks' duration invites, I do not know—but whenever an Englishman leaves these shores, the effect is to peel off, not the rags of his body, but the verminous rags from his intellect and soul. He leaves behind him in England all the stupidity which some of us cherish, and he lands in Australia with

his vision so clear, that he can see things in a common-sense manner.

I want to ask you as reasonable men, as men of business—there is not a man who cannot understand this question moderately well—is this spoliation? Is this agrarian outrage? Is this stimulating the working-man and the agricultural labourer to—what shall I say?—to, it may be, incendiarism or to something worse? It is nothing of the kind; it is but laying before them those just principles of law and practice which are admitted to be just in every other country in the world than this, and which we admit to be just with regard to everything else, except the single article of land.

We are charged with all sorts of dreadful things by that gentleman in the Mask. On the 27th of November he wrote this of Mr. Cobden. He said:—

'He [Mr. Cobden] stoops down and picks up a weapon which has never yet been used but for anarchy and revolution. Is it not in fact to tell the labourer and the workman to look over the fence of the neighbouring proprietor, and learn to think that they have a natural right to a slice of the soil?'

Surely, if they are industrious and frugal, and can save the means to purchase, and there be anybody who would wish to sell, and the law steps in and makes it difficult to sell and to buy, then, I say, that labourer has a right to look over the hedge, and to feel that the law deals a grievous injustice to him.

And it is this gentleman in the Mask that frightens the landed proprietors. I met the other day with a gentleman connected with one of the largest properties in the kingdom. He said to me, —and he is a very liberal and thoughtful man,—he said to me, 'You have no idea of the terror which your speeches create amongst landed gentlemen.' Now, I never frighten any of my neighbours. I do not know why I should be so alarming to those gentlemen who live in their great houses and castles. But the fact is the landed gentlemen are not a wise class. There are brilliant exceptions. There are men amongst them, many of whom cannot be surpassed by any of their own class, or of any other class in the world. But as a class, and, perhaps, one might say it of nearly every class—I believe it is true of that to which I belong in Lancashire—they are not a wise class. They know something of agriculture—county Members have to get it up for agricultural dinners —and they know something of horses—and they know all that can be known on the subject of game. But on the principles of law and of government, speaking of them as a whole, and judging of them by their past course, they are dark as night itself. Would you believe it—young men here do not recollect it—that the landed proprietors could never find out, till Mr. Cobden and a few others told them, that the Corn-law was a great injury to them? They did not know that it actually lowered the value of their land, and diminished the security of their rents, and that it loaded them with an inconceivable amount of public odium; whilst, at the same time, it beggared hundreds and thousands of the people, and it menaced this nation with rebellion.

Mr. Cobden and I, and others who acted with us, but we chiefly, because perhaps we were the most prominent, were slandered then by the gentleman in the Mask, just as we have been now. The *Times* was as foul-mouthed upon us twenty years ago as it is at this moment. It said that we went about the country setting class against class. It said that our views led to the confiscation of landed property. It said everything that was spiteful and untrue, as it says now. And yet, is there any man in this country who will not admit that property is more secure in consequence of the abolition of that law, which landowners believed to be the anchor of their safety, and that animosities between class and class have been allayed? And who shall tell how much it is

owing to this reform that our Queen at this moment wields an unchallenged sceptre over a tranquil realm? A landowner in the House of Commons, an old Member of the House, a representative of a south-western county, a man of excellent character, for whom I have always had the greatest respect, even when he was most in the wrong,—he told me not long ago, speaking about the Corn-law, that they did not then know the good we were doing to his class. I smiled and said to him, 'If you would only have faith, I could tell one or two other things that would do you just as much good if you would let us try them.' But he had no faith.

Now, I will just say to the landowners that I was never more their friend than when discussing this question which I am occupied with to-night, without the least animosity to them, and with a belief as firm as I ever had on the question of the Corn-law, that their interests are bound up with the interests of the people in the right solution of this question. I would ask, then, to what are they tending under the operation of these laws? They are becoming every year smaller and smaller in number. The large owners are rapidly eating up the smaller ones. The census returns show that the number of landed proprietors is but a handful in the nation, and every day becoming fewer and fewer. Their labourers remain at the 9s. or 10s. a-week. Somebody will write to the paper to-morrow and say they get 12s.; but bear in mind that they do not always receive wages on wet days, and I believe the average money income of the agricultural labourer throughout the United Kingdom will not exceed—and many persons will say it will not reach —10s. a-week. Now the smaller in number these landed proprietors become, the more, it may be, these labourers will become discontented. There may arise some political accident, and political accidents are almost as unlooked-for as other accidents. You do not hear the tread of the earthquake which topples down your firmest architecture, and you do not see—the country gentlemen do not see—the tread of that danger, it may be that catastrophe, which inevitably follows upon prolonged unjust legislation. There may come a time, and I dare prophesy that it will come if there be an obstinate retention of our present system, when there will be a movement in this country to establish here, not what I believe to be the just and moderate and sufficient plan which I recommend, but a plan which shall be in accordance with that which is established by the Code Napoleon in France, and which is spreading rapidly over the whole of the Continent of Europe. And I would ask them again how do they purpose to keep their population, if this system is to be maintained?

And now, addressing you working-men who are here, I beg your attention to two or three observations on this point. America, though three thousand miles off, is not so far off but that people may go there in about twelve days, and may go there for a sum varying from 2*l.* to 5*l.* You know that in this very year—I mean the year which is just passed—150,000 or 160,000 persons have sailed from this country to New York. Every man who settles there is not blinded by the mystifications and the falsities uttered by the New York correspondent of the *Times*. He is there and can see what the working-man earns, and how he is treated, and what he is, and he writes over to his friends in this country—as has been the case for years in Ireland—and the result is that Ireland is being drained, not of its surplus population but of the population absolutely necessary to the proper cultivation of the soil.

Let me tell you a fact, and if you do not treasure it up in your minds, I hope some of those gentlemen, the landowners, who think I am very hostile to them, will just consider it, if they have time, as they eat their breakfast and read the paper to-morrow, or the next day. In America there are

140,000,000 of acres of land, surveyed, mapped out, set apart for those who are ready to settle upon them. In the year 1861 (that was the first year before the war attained its present proportions), there were not less than 40,000 new farms, averaging eighty acres each, occupied in the Western States. But the Government of the United States, not content with that measure of progress, framed an Act which came into operation on the 1st of January, 1863, called the Homestead Act. I have a copy of the Act here, and the circular which was issued from the Department of State, giving directions as to how this Act should be worked throughout the Union. What is the Homestead Act? It is this. It says that any man of twenty-one years of age, or younger, if he has been for a fortnight or a little more in the service of the United States, whether in the army or navy—any man of twenty-one years of age may come into these territories, may choose what is called a section, which is 160 acres of land, being one-fourth of a square mile, and on payment of a fee of ten dollars, which is equal to two pounds English, may apply to have this land conveyed to him for no other payment for a term of five years. It cannot be alienated, he is not allowed to sell it, it remains in his possession. At the end of five years, he having done to it what the Government requires, that is, settled upon it and begun cultivation and so forth, the law gives him what is called a patent, but what we should call a Parliamentary title, and the land is his own absolute freehold for ever. Now it would not take more than 15*l.* for a man to go from Birmingham to the territory where this land is to be disposed of. If he had not got any money by which he could take up 160 acres, he might engage himself to a neighbouring farmer, and would get, I believe, now, about twenty shillings a-week wages, besides his board and lodgings, and if he worked as a labourer for two or three years he would be able to save a sum sufficient for him to commence the cultivation of a portion of his farm, and would be settled down there as a farmer and freeholder on his own estate.

Do not let me leave you with the idea that there is no rough and rugged career in this. There is much that is rough and much that is rugged, but there is a good deal of that sort in this country now. And when a man looks upon those children that create even in the poorest house, sometimes, a gleam of joy,—when he thinks what those boys and girls must be in this country, —that they can never rise one step higher than that which he occupies now as an agricultural labourer, and when he looks abroad and he sees them, not labourers in the sense in which we speak here, not tenants even, but freeholders, and landowners, and farmers of their own property—then, I say, that the temptation held out to men here to emigrate, if men knew all the facts, would be irresistible to hundreds of thousands who have now no thought of moving to another country. But the agricultural labourer is not as he once was, in one respect. There are some feeble efforts made to give him some little instruction. There are newspapers published at a price which at one time was deemed impossible, and these find their way into agricultural villages. And the labourers will gradually begin to open their eyes, and to see that a change of their position is not so impossible as once they thought it was. What is it the United States offer more? They offer social equality—they offer political equality—they offer to every child of every man in whose face I am now looking, education—from the learning of his alphabet to, if he has the capacity to travel so far, the highest knowledge of classics and mathematics which are offered to the best students in the colleges of this country. And all this without the payment of one single farthing, except that general payment in which all the people participate in the school-rate of the various States of the Union.

I ask you if I am wrong in saying to

the rich and the great, that I believe, if they knew their own interests, that it would be worth their while to try to make this country a more desirable country for the labourer to live in. If they disregard this great question, we, who are of the middle, and not absolutely powerless class, shall have to decide between the claims of territorial magnates and the just rights of millions of our countrymen. Some men I meet with—and now and then I wonder where they were born, and why they came into the world—regard these territorial magnates as idols before whom we are all to bow down in humble submission. Travellers tell us there is a tribe in Africa so entirely given up to superstition that they fill their huts and hovels with so many idols that they do not even leave room for their families. It may be so in this country We build up a system which is injurious to our political freedom, and is destructive of the intelligence, and the comfort, and the morality, and the best interests of our producing and working classes. Now, am I the enemy of any class, when I come forward to state facts like these, and to explain principles such as these? Shall we go on groping continually in the dark, and make no effort to strengthen our position? Do not suppose because I stand here oftener to find fault with the laws of my country than to praise them, that I am less English or less patriotic, or that I have less sympathy for my country or my countrymen than other men have. I want our country to be populous, to be powerful, and to be happy. But this can only be done—it never has been done in any country—but by just laws justly administered. I plead only for what I believe to be just. I wish to do wrong to no man. For twenty-five years I have stood before audiences—great meetings of my countrymen—pleading only for justice. During that time, as you know, I have endured measureless insult, and have passed through hurricanes of abuse. I need not tell you that my clients have not been generally the rich and the great, but rather the poor and the lowly. They cannot give me place and dignities and wealth; but honourable service in their cause yields me that which is of far higher and more lasting value—the consciousness that I have laboured to expound and uphold laws, which, though they were not given amid the thunders of Sinai, are not less the commandments of God, and not less intended to promote and secure the happiness of men.

aper to-morrow, or
In America there are

PEACE.

EDINBURGH, OCTOBER 13, 1853.

[This speech was spoken at the Conference of the Peace Society, held at Edinburgh in the autumn of 1853. The relation of this meeting to the Russian war, then impending, made the gathering more than ordinarily important.]

It is a great advantage in this country, I think, that we have no want of ample criticism. Whatever we may have said yesterday and to-day will form the subject of criticism, not of the most friendly character, in very many newspapers throughout the United Kingdom. I recollect when we met in Manchester, that papers disposed to be friendly, warned us as to the course we were taking, and that the time was ill-chosen for a peace meeting. It was said that the people were excited against France, and were alarmed at their almost total defencelessness, and that there was no use in endeavouring to place before them the facts which the peace men offered to their audience. The result showed that they were mistaken, for you will recollect that, while up to that meeting there was a constantly swelling tide of alarm and hostility with regard to France, from the day the Conference was held there was a gradual receding of the tide, that the alarm and apprehension rapidly diminished, and that by the time the House of Commons met in February we were willing to receive from Lord John Russell and other statesmen the most positive assurances that France was not increasing her force, and that [illegible] not the slightest would be able to save the Government for him to commence th[illegible]ng but the most friendly feeling towards the Government of this country.

The right time to oppose the errors and prejudices of the people never comes to the eyes of those writers in the public press who pander to these prejudices. They say, We must not do so and so, we shall embarrass the Government. But rumour says the Government has been pretty well embarrassed already. They say that we shall complicate the question if we interfere; but it cannot well be more complicated than it is; for hardly anybody but the peace men can tell how to unravel it. Next, they tell us that we shall impair the harmony of opinion which there appears to be in the country, from the fact of there having been three or four insignificant meetings, by which the Government is to be impelled to more active and energetic measures. Now, what is it that we really want here? We wish to protest against the maintenance of great armaments in time of peace; we wish to protest against the spirit which is not only willing for war, but eager for war; and we wish to protest, with all the emphasis of which we are capable, against the mischievous policy pursued so long by this country, of interfering with the internal affairs of other countries, and thereby leading to disputes, and often to disastrous wars.

I mentioned last night what it was we were annually spending on our armaments. Admiral Napier says that the hon. Member for the West Riding, who can do everything, had persuaded a feeble Government to reduce the armaments of this country to 'nothing.' What is 'nothing' in the Admiral's estimation? Fifteen millions a-year! Was all that money thrown away? We have it in the estimates, we pay it out of the taxes—it is appropriated by Parliament, it sustains your dockyards, pays the wages of your men, and maintains your ships. Fifteen millions sterling paid in the very year when the Admiral says that my hon. Friend reduced the armaments of the country to nothing! But take the sums which we spent for the past year in warlike preparations—seventeen millions, and the interest on debt caused by war—twenty-eight millions sterling; and it amounts to 45,000,000*l*. What are our whole exports? Even this year, far the largest year of exports we have ever known, they may amount to 80,000,000*l*. Well, then, plant some one at the mouth of every port and harbour in the United Kingdom, and let him take every alternate ship that leaves your rivers and your harbours with all its valuable cargo on board, and let him carry it off as tribute, and it will not amount to the cost that you pay every year for a war, that fifty years ago was justified as much as it is attempted to justify this impending war, and for the preparations which you now make after a peace which has lasted for thirty-eight years.

Every twenty years—in a nation's life nothing, in a person's life something—every twenty years a thousand millions sterling out of the industry of the hard-working people of this United Kingdom, are extorted, appropriated, and expended to pay for that unnecessary and unjust war, and for the absurd and ruinous expenditure which you now incur. A thousand millions every twenty years! Apply a thousand millions, not every twenty years, but for one period of twenty years, to objects of good in this country, and it would be rendered more like a paradise than anything that history records of man's condition, and would make so great a change in these islands, that a man having seen them as they are now, and seeing them as they might then be, would not recognise them as the same country, nor our population as the same people. But what do we expend all this for? Bear in mind that admirals, and generals, and statesmen defended that great war, and that your newspapers, with scarcely an exception, were in favour of it, and denounced and ostracised hundreds of good men who dared, as we dare now, to denounce the spirit which would again lead this country into war. We went to war that France should not choose its own Government; the grand conclusion was that no Bonaparte should sit on the throne of France; yet France has all along been changing its Government from that time to this, and now we find ourselves with a Bonaparte on the throne of France, and, for anything I know to the contrary, likely to remain there a good while. So far, therefore, for the calculations of our forefathers, and for the results of that enormous expenditure which they have saddled upon us.

We object to these great armaments as provoking a war spirit. I should like to ask, what was the object of the Chobham exhibition? There were special trains at the disposal of Members of Parliament, to go down to Chobham the one day, and to Spithead the other. What was the use of our pointing to the President of the French Republic two years ago, who is the Emperor now, and saying that he was spending his time at playing at soldiers in his great camp at Satory, and in making great circuses for the amusement of his soldiers? We, too, are getting into the way of playing at soldiers, and camps, and fleets, and the object of this is to raise up in the spirit of the people a feeling antagonistic to peace, and to render the people—the deluded, hard-working, toiling people—satisfied with

the extortion of 17,000,000*l.* annually, when, upon the very principles of the men who take it, it might be demonstrated that one-half of the money would be amply sufficient for the purpose to which it is devoted. What observation has been more common during the discussion upon Turkey than this—'Why are we to keep up these great fleets if we are not to use them? Why have we our Mediterranean fleet lying at Besika Bay, when it might be earning glory, and adding to the warlike renown of the country?' This is just what comes from the maintenance of great fleets and armies. There grows up an *esprit de corps* there grows a passion for these things, a powerful opinion in their favour, that smothers the immorality of the whole thing, and leads the people to tolerate, under those excited feelings, that which, under feelings of greater temperance and moderation, they would know was hostile to their country, as it is opposed to everything which we recognise as the spirit of the Christian religion.

Then, we are against intervention. Now, this question of intervention is a most important one, for this reason, that it comes before us sometimes in a form so attractive that it invites us to embrace it, and asks us by all our love of freedom, by all our respect for men struggling for their rights, to interfere in the affairs of some other country. And we find now in this country that a great number of those who are calling out loudest for interference are those who, being very liberal in their politics, are bitterly hostile to the despotism and exclusiveness of the Russian Government. But I should like to ask this meeting what sort of intervention we are to have? There are three kinds—one for despotism, one for liberty; and you may have an intervention like that now proposed, from a vague sense of danger which cannot be accurately described. What have our interventions been up to this time? I will come to that of which Admiral Napier spoke by-and-by. It is not long since we intervened in the case of Spain. The foreign enlistment laws were suspended; and English soldiers went to join the Spanish legion, and the Government of Spain was fixed in the present Queen of that country; and yet Spain has the most exclusive tariff against this country in the world, and a dead Englishman is there reckoned little better than a dead dog. Then take the case of Portugal. We interfered, and Admiral Napier was one of those employed in that interference, to place the Queen of Portugal on the throne, and yet she has violated every clause of the charter which she had sworn to the people; and in 1849, under the Government of Lord John Russell, and with Lord Palmerston in the Foreign Office, our fleet entered the Tagus and destroyed the Liberal party, by allowing the Queen to escape from their hands, when they would have driven her to give additional guarantees for liberty; and from that time to this she has still continued to violate every clause of the charter of the country. Now, let us come to Syria; what has Admiral Napier said about the Syrian war? He told us that the English fleet was scattered all about the Mediterranean, and that if the French fleet had come to Cherbourg, and had taken on board 50,000 men and landed them on our coasts, all sorts of things would have befallen us. But how happened it that Admiral Napier and his friends got up the quarrel with the French? Because we interfered in the Syrian question when we had no business to interfere whatever. The Egyptian Pasha, the vassal of the Sultan, became more powerful than the Sultan, and threatened to depose him and place himself as monarch upon the throne of Constantinople; and but for England, he would assuredly have done it. Why did we interfere? What advantage was it to us to have a feeble monarch in Constantinople, when you might have had an energetic and powerful one in Mehemet Ali? We interfered, however, and quarrelled with France, although she neither declared war nor landed men upon our coast.

FOREIGN POLICY.

BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 29, 1858.

[This speech was spoken at a banquet given to Mr. Bright in the Town Hall of Birmingham, on the occasion of his first visit to his constituents there. It treats of the Foreign Policy of the country since the Revolution of 1688, and defends the Foreign Policy advocated by Mr. Cobden and himself.]

The frequent and far too complimentary manner in which my name has been mentioned to-night, and the most kind way in which you have received me, have placed me in a position somewhat humiliating, and really painful; for to receive laudation which one feels one cannot possibly have merited, is much more painful than to be passed by in a distribution of commendation to which possibly one might lay some claim. If one-twentieth part of what has been said is true, if I am entitled to any measure of your approbation, I may begin to think that my public career and my opinions are not so un-English and so anti-national as some of those who profess to be the best of our public instructors have sometimes assumed. How, indeed, can I, any more than any of you, be un-English and anti-national? Was I not born upon the same soil? Do I not come of the same English stock? Are not my family committed irrevocably to the fortunes of this country? Is not whatever property I may have depending as much as yours is depending upon the good government of our common fatherland? Then how shall any man dare to say to any one of his countrymen, because he happens to hold a different opinion on questions of great public policy, that therefore he is un-English, and is to be condemned as anti-national? There are those who would assume that between my countrymen and me, and between my constituents and me, there has been, and there is now, a great gulf fixed, and that if I cannot pass over to them and to you, they and you can by no possibility pass over to me.

Now, I take the liberty here, in the presence of an audience as intelligent as can be collected within the limits of this island, and of those who have the strongest claims to know what opinions I do entertain relative to certain great questions of public policy, to assert that I hold no views, that I have never promulgated any views on those controverted questions with respect to which I cannot bring as witnesses in my favour, and as fellow-believers with myself, some of the best and most revered names in the history of English statesmanship. About 120 years ago, the Government of this country was directed by Sir Robert Walpole, a great Minister, who for a long period preserved the country

in peace, and whose pride it was that during those years he had done so. Unfortunately, towards the close of his career, he was driven by faction into a policy which was the ruin of his political position. Sir Robert Walpole declared, when speaking of the question of war as affecting this country, that nothing could be so foolish, nothing so mad as a policy of war for a trading nation. And he went so far as to say, that any peace was better than the most successful war. I do not give you the precise language made use of by the Minister, for I speak only from memory; but I am satisfied I am not misrepresenting him in what I have now stated.

Come down fifty years nearer to our own time, and you find a statesman, not long in office, but still strong in the affections of all persons of Liberal principles in this country, and in his time representing fully the sentiments of the Liberal party—Charles James Fox. Mr. Fox, referring to the policy of the Government of his time, which was one of constant interference in the affairs of Europe, and by which the country was continually involved in the calamities of war, said that although he would not assert or maintain the principle, that under no circumstances could England have any cause of interference with the affairs of the continent of Europe, yet he would prefer the policy of positive non-interference and of perfect isolation rather than the constant intermeddling to which our recent policy had subjected us, and which brought so much trouble and suffering upon the country. In this case also I am not prepared to give you his exact words, but I am sure that I fairly describe the sentiments which he expressed.

Come down fifty years later, and to a time within the recollection of most of us, and you find another statesman, once the most popular man in England, and still remembered in this town and elsewhere with respect and affection. I allude to Earl Grey. When Earl Grey came into office for the purpose of carrying the question of Parliamentary Reform, he unfurled the banner of 'Peace, retrenchment, and reform,' and that sentiment was received in every part of the United Kingdom, by every man who was or had been in favour of Liberal principles, as predicting the advent of a new era which should save his country from many of the calamities of the past.

Come down still nearer, and to a time that seems but the other day, and you find another Minister, second to none of those whom I have mentioned—the late Sir Robert Peel. I had the opportunity of observing the conduct of Sir Robert Peel, from the time when he took office in 1841; I watched his proceedings particularly from the year 1843, when I entered Parliament, up to the time of his lamented death; and during the whole of that period, I venture to say, his principles, if they were to be discovered from his conduct and his speeches, were precisely those which I have held, and which I have always endeavoured to press upon the attention of my countrymen. If you have any doubt upon that point I would refer you to that last, that beautiful, that most solemn speech, which he delivered with an earnestness and a sense of responsibility as if he had known he was leaving a legacy to his country. If you refer to that speech, delivered on the morning of the very day on which occurred the accident which terminated his life, you will find that its whole tenor is in conformity with all the doctrines that I have urged upon my countrymen for years past with respect to our policy in foreign affairs. When Sir Robert Peel went home just before the dawn of day, upon the last occasion that he passed from the House of Commons, the scene of so many of his triumphs, I have heard, from what I think a good authority, that after he entered his own house, he expressed the exceeding relief which he experienced at having delivered himself of a speech which he had been reluctantly obliged to make against a Ministry which he was anxious to support, and

he added, if I am not mistaken, 'I have made a speech of peace.'

Well, if this be so, if I can give you four names like these,—if there were time I could make a longer list of still eminent, if inferior men,—I should like to know why I, as one of a small party, am to be set down as teaching some new doctrine which it is not fit for my countrymen to hear, and why I am to be assailed in every form of language, as if there was one great department of governmental affairs on which I was incompetent to offer any opinion to my countrymen. But leaving the opinions of individuals, I appeal to this audience, to every man who knows anything of the views and policy of the Liberal party in past years, whether it is not the fact that up to 1832, and indeed to a much later period, probably to the year 1850, those sentiments of Sir Robert Walpole, of Mr. Fox, of Earl Grey, and of Sir Robert Peel, the sentiments which I in humbler mode have propounded, were not received unanimously by the Liberal party as their fixed and unchangeable creed? And why should they not? Are they not founded upon reason? Do not all statesmen know, as you know, that upon peace, and peace alone, can be based the successful industry of a nation, and that by successful industry alone can be created that wealth which, permeating all classes of the people, not confined to great proprietors, great merchants, and great speculators, not running in a stream merely down your principal streets, but turning fertilizing rivulets into every bye-lane and every alley, tends so powerfully to promote the comfort, happiness, and contentment of a nation? Do you not know that all progress comes from successful and peaceful industry, and that upon it is based your superstructure of education, of morals, of self-respect among your people, as well as every measure for extending and consolidating freedom in your public institutions? I am not afraid to acknowledge that I do oppose—that I do utterly condemn and denounce—a great part of the foreign policy which is practised and adhered to by the Government of this country.

You know, of course, that about 170 years ago there happened in this country what we have always been accustomed to call 'a Glorious Revolution'—a Revolution which had this effect: that it put a bit into the mouth of the monarch, so that he was not able of his own freewill to do, and he dared no longer attempt to do, the things which his predecessors had done without fear. But if at the Revolution the monarchy of England was bridled and bitted, at the same time the great territorial families of England were enthroned; and from that period, until the year 1831 or 1832—until the time when Birmingham politically became famous—those territorial families reigned with an almost undisputed sway over the destinies and the industry of the people of these kingdoms. If you turn to the history of England, from the period of the Revolution to the present, you will find that an entirely new policy was adopted, and that while we had endeavoured in former times to keep ourselves free from European complications, we now began to act upon a system of constant entanglement in the affairs of foreign countries, as if there was neither property nor honours, nor anything worth striving for, to be acquired in any other field. The language coined and used then, has continued to our day. Lord Somers, in writing for William III, speaks of the endless and sanguinary wars of that period as wars 'to maintain the liberties of Europe.' There were wars 'to support the Protestant interest,' and there were many wars to preserve our old friend 'the balance of power.'

We have been at war since that time, I believe, with, for, and against every considerable nation in Europe. We fought to put down a pretended French supremacy under Louis XIV. We fought to prevent France and Spain coming under the sceptre of one monarch, although, if we had not fought, it would have been impossible in the course of

things that they should have become so united. We fought to maintain the Italian provinces in connection with the House of Austria. We fought to put down the supremacy of Napoleon Bonaparte; and the Minister who was employed by this country at Vienna, after the great war, when it was determined that no Bonaparte should ever again sit on the throne of France, was the very man to make an alliance with another Bonaparte for the purpose of carrying on a war to prevent the supremacy of the late Emperor of Russia. So that we have been all round Europe, and across it over and over again, and after a policy so distinguished, so pre-eminent, so long-continued, and so costly, I think we have a fair right—I have, at least—to ask those who are in favour of it to show us its visible result. Europe is not at this moment, so far as I know, speaking of it broadly, and making allowance for certain improvements in its general civilisation, more free politically than it was before. The balance of power is like perpetual motion, or any of those impossible things which some men are always racking their brains and spending their time and money to accomplish.

We all know and deplore that at the present moment a large number of the grown men of Europe are employed, and a large portion of the industry of Europe is absorbed, to provide for, and maintain, the enormous armaments which are now on foot in every considerable Continental State. Assuming, then, that Europe is not much better in consequence of the sacrifices we have made, let us inquire what has been the result in England, because, after all, that is the question which it becomes us most to consider. I believe that I understate the sum when I say that, in pursuit of this Will-o'-the-wisp, (the liberties of Europe and the balance of power,) there has been extracted from the industry of the people of this small island no less an amount than 2,000,000,000*l.* sterling. I cannot imagine how much 2,000,000,000*l.* is, and therefore I shall not attempt to make you comprehend it. I presume it is something like those vast and incomprehensible astronomical distances with which we have been lately made familiar; but, however familiar, we feel that we do not know one bit more about them than we did before. When I try to think of that sum of 2,000,000,000*l.*, there is a sort of vision passes before my mind's eye. I see your peasant labourer delve and plough, sow and reap, sweat beneath the summer's sun, or grow prematurely old before the winter's blast. I see your noble mechanic, with his manly countenance and his matchless skill, toiling at his bench or his forge. I see one of the workers in our factories in the north, a woman—a girl, it may be—gentle and good, as many of them are, as your sisters and daughters are—I see her intent upon the spindle, whose revolutions are so rapid that the eye fails altogether to detect them, or watching the alternating flight of the unresting shuttle. I turn again to another portion of your population, which, 'plunged in mines, forgets a sun was made,' and I see the man who brings up from the secret chambers of the earth the elements of the riches and greatness of his country. When I see all this, I have before me a mass of produce and of wealth which I am no more able to comprehend than I am that 2,000,000,000*l.* of which I have spoken, but I behold in its full proportions the hideous error of your Governments, whose fatal policy consumes in some cases a half, never less than a third, of all the results of that industry which God intended should fertilise and bless every home in England, but the fruits of which are squandered in every part of the surface of the globe, without producing the smallest good to the people of England.

We have, it is true, some visible results that are of a more positive character. We have that which some people call a great advantage—the National Debt—a debt which is now so large that the most prudent, the most economical, and

the most honest have given up all hope, not of its being paid off, but of its being diminished in amount. We have, too, taxes which have been during many years so onerous that there have been times when the patient beasts of burden threatened to revolt—so onerous that it has been utterly impossible to levy them with any kind of honest equality, according to the means of the people to pay them. We have that, moreover, which is a standing wonder to all foreigners who consider our condition—an amount of apparently immovable pauperism, which to strangers is wholly irreconcileable with the fact that we, as a nation, produce more of what should make us all comfortable, than is produced by any other nation of similar numbers on the face of the globe. Let us likewise remember that during the period of those great and so-called glorious contests on the continent of Europe, every description of home reform was not only delayed, but actually crushed out of the minds of the great bulk of the people. There can be no doubt whatever that in 1793 England was about to realise political changes and reforms, such as did not appear again until 1830; and during the period of that war, which now almost all men agree to have been wholly unnecessary, we were passing through a period which may be described as the dark age of English politics; when there was no more freedom to write or speak, or politically to act, than there is now in the most despotic country of Europe.

But, it may be asked, did nobody gain? If Europe is no better, and the people of England have been so much worse, who has benefited by the new system of foreign policy? What has been the fate of those who were enthroned at the Revolution, and whose supremacy has been for so long a period undisputed among us? Mr. Kinglake, the [illegible] of an interesting book on
your people, [illegible] describing the habits of
for extending and [illegible] that he made in the
in your public inst[illegible] that the jackals of
afraid to acknowle[illegible]ir prey in families
pose—that I do ut[illegible]

like the place-hunters of Europe. I will reverse, if you like, the comparison, and say that the great territorial families of England, which were enthroned at the Revolution, have followed their prey like the jackals of the Desert. Do you not observe at a glance, that, from the time of William III, by reason of the foreign policy which I denounce, wars have been multiplied, taxes increased, loans made, and the sums of money which every year the Government has to expend augmented, and that so the patronage at the disposal of Ministers must have increased also, and the families who were enthroned and made powerful in the legislation and administration of the country must have had the first pull at, and the largest profit out of, that patronage? There is no actuary in existence who can calculate how much of the wealth, of the strength, of the supremacy of the territorial families of England has been derived from an unholy participation in the fruits of the industry of the people, which have been wrested from them by every device of taxation, and squandered in every conceivable crime of which a Government could possibly be guilty.

The more you examine this matter the more you will come to the conclusion which I have arrived at, that this foreign policy, this regard for 'the liberties of Europe,' this care at one time for 'the Protestant interests,' this excessive love for the 'balance of power,' is neither more nor less than a gigantic system of out-door relief for the aristocracy of Great Britain. [Great laughter.] I observe that you receive that declaration as if it were some new and important discovery. In 1815, when the great war with France was ended, every Liberal in England, whose politics, whose hopes, and whose faith had not been crushed out of him by the tyranny of the time of that war, was fully aware of this, and openly admitted it, and up to 1832, and for some years afterwards, it was the fixed and undoubted creed of the great Liberal party. But somehow all is changed. We who stand upon

the old landmarks, who walk in the old paths, who would conserve what is wise and prudent, are hustled and shoved about as if we were come to turn the world upside down. The change which has taken place seems to confirm the opinion of a lamented friend of mine, who, not having succeeded in all his hopes, thought that men made no progress whatever, but went round and round like a squirrel in a cage. The idea is now so general that it is our duty to meddle everywhere, that it really seems as if we had pushed the Tories from the field, expelling them by our competition.

I should like to lay before you a list of the treaties which we have made, and of the responsibilities under which we have laid ourselves with respect to the various countries of Europe. I do not know where such an enumeration is to be found, but I suppose it would be possible for antiquaries and men of investigating minds to dig them out from the recesses of the Foreign Office, and perhaps to make some of them intelligible to the country. I believe, however, that if we go to the Baltic we shall find that we have a treaty to defend Sweden, and the only thing which Sweden agrees to do in return is not to give up any portion of her territories to Russia. Coming down a little south, we have a treaty which invites us, enables us, and perhaps, if we acted fully up to our duty with regard to it, would compel us to interfere in the question between Denmark and the Duchies. If I mistake not, we have a treaty which binds us down to the maintenance of the little kingdom of Belgium, as established after its separation from Holland. We have numerous treaties with France. We are understood to be bound by treaty to maintain constitutional government in Spain and Portugal. If we go round into the Mediterranean, we find the little kingdom of Sardinia, to which we have lent some millions of money, and with which we have entered into important treaties for preserving the balance of power in Europe. If we go beyond the kingdoms of Italy, and cross the Adriatic, we come to the small kingdom of Greece, against which we have a nice account that will never be settled; while we have engagements to maintain that respectable but diminutive country under its present constitutional government. Then, leaving the kingdom of Greece, we pass up the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and from Greece to the Red Sea, wherever the authority of the Sultan is more or less admitted, the blood and the industry of England are pledged to the permanent sustentation of the 'independence and integrity' of the Ottoman Empire.

I confess that as a citizen of this country, wishing to live peaceably among my fellow-countrymen, and wishing to see my countrymen free, and able to enjoy the fruits of their labour, I protest against a system which binds us in all these networks and complications, from which it is impossible that we can gain one single atom of advantage for this country. It is not all glory, after all. Glory may be worth something, but it is not always glory. We have had within the last few years despatches from Vienna and from St. Petersburg, which, if we had not deserved them, would have been very offensive and not a little insolent. We have had the Ambassador of the Queen expelled summarily from Madrid, and we have had an Ambassador driven almost with ignominy from Washington. We have blockaded Athens for a claim which was known to be false. We have quarrelled with Naples, for we chose to give advice to Naples, which was not received in the submissive spirit expected from her, and our Minister was therefore withdrawn. Not three years ago, too, we seized a considerable kingdom in India, with which our Government had but recently entered into the most solemn treaty, which every lawyer in England and in Europe, I believe, would consider binding before God and the world. We deposed its monarch; we committed a great immorality and a great crime, and we have reaped an

almost instantaneous retribution in the most gigantic and sanguinary revolt which probably any nation ever made against its conquerors. Within the last few years we have had two wars with a great Empire, which we are told contains at least one-third of the whole human race. The first war was called, and appropriately called, the Opium War. No man, I believe, with a spark of morality in his composition, no man who cares anything for the opinion of his fellow-countrymen, has dared to justify that war. The war which has just been concluded, if it has been concluded, had its origin in the first war; for the enormities committed in the first war are the foundation of the implacable hostility which it is said the inhabitants of Canton bear to all persons connected with the English name. Yet, though we have these troubles in India—a vast country which we do not know how to govern—and a war with China—a country with which, though everybody else can remain at peace, we cannot—such is the inveterate habit of conquest, such is the insatiable lust of territory, such is, *in my view*, the depraved, unhappy state of opinion of the country on this subject, that there are not a few persons, Chambers of Commerce to wit, in different parts of the kingdom (though I am glad to say it has not been so with the Chamber of Commerce at Birmingham), who have been urging our Government to take possession of a province of the greatest island in the Eastern seas; a possession which must at once necessitate increased estimates and increased taxation, and which would probably lead us into merciless and disgraceful wars with the half-savage tribes who inhabit that island.

I will not dwell upon that question. The gentleman who is principally concerned in it is at this moment, as you know, stricken down with affliction, and I am unwilling to enter here into any considerable discussion of the case which he is urging upon the public; but I say that we have territory enough in India; and if we have not troubles enough there, if we have not difficulties enough in China, if we have not taxation enough, by all means gratify your wishes for more; but I hope that whatever may be the shortcomings of the Government with regard to any other questions in which we are all interested —and may they be few!—they will shut their eyes, they will turn their backs obstinately from adding in this mode, or in any mode, to the English possessions in the East. I suppose that if any ingenious person were to prepare a large map of the world, as far as it is known, and were to mark upon it, in any colour that he liked, the spots where Englishmen have fought and English blood has been poured forth, and the treasure of England squandered, scarcely a country, scarcely a province of the vast expanse of the habitable globe would be thus undistinguished.

Perhaps there are in this room, I am sure there are in the country, many persons who hold a superstitious traditionary belief that, somehow or other, our vast trade is to be attributed to what we have done in this way, that it is thus we *have opened markets and advanced commerce*, that English greatness depends upon the extent of English conquests and English military renown. But I am inclined to think that, with the exception of Australia, there is not a single dependency of the Crown which, if we come to reckon what it has cost in war and protection, would not be found to be a positive loss to the people of this country. Take the United States, with which we have such an enormous and constantly increasing trade. The wise statesmen of the last generation, men whom your school histories tell you were statesmen, serving under a monarch who they tell you was a patriotic monarch, spent 130,000,000*l.* of the fruits of the industry of the people in a vain—happily a vain—endeavour to retain the colonies of the United States in subjection to the Monarchy of England. Add up the interest of that 130,000,000*l.* for all this time, and how long do you think it will be before

there will be a profit on the trade with the United States which will repay the enormous sum we invested in a war to retain those States as colonies of this Empire? It never will be paid off. Wherever you turn, you will find that the opening of markets, developing of new countries, introducing cotton cloth with cannon balls, are vain, foolish, and wretched excuses for wars, and ought not to be listened to for a moment by any man who understands the multiplication table, or who can do the simplest sum in arithmetic.

Since the 'Glorious Revolution,' since the enthronisation of the great Norman territorial families, they have spent in wars, and we have worked for, about 2,000,000,000*l*. The interest on that is 100,000,000*l*. per annum, which alone, to say nothing of the principal sum, is three or four times as much as the whole amount of your annual export trade from that time to this. Therefore, if war has provided you with a trade, it has been at an enormous cost; but I think it is by no means doubtful that your trade would have been no less in amount and no less profitable had peace and justice been inscribed on your flag instead of conquest and the love of military renown. But even in this year, 1858—we have got a long way into the century—we find that within the last seven years our public debt has greatly increased. Whatever be the increase of our population, of our machinery, of our industry, of our wealth, still our national debt goes on increasing. Although we have not a foot more territory to conserve, or an enemy in the world who dreams of attacking us, we find that our annual military expenses during the last twenty years have risen from 12,000,000*l*. to 22,000,000*l*.

Some people believe that it is a good thing to pay a great revenue to the State. Even so eminent a man as Lord John Russell is not without a delusion of this sort. Lord John Russell, as you have heard, while speaking of me in flattering and friendly terms, says he is unfortunately obliged to differ from me frequently; therefore, I suppose, there is no particular harm in my saying that I am sometimes obliged to differ from him. Some time ago he was a great star in the northern hemisphere, shining, not with unaccustomed, but with his usual brilliancy at Liverpool. He made a speech, in which there was a great deal to be admired, to a meeting composed, it was said, to a great extent of working-men; and in it he stimulated them to a feeling of pride in the greatness of their country and in being citizens of a State which enjoyed a revenue of 100,000,000*l*. a-year, which included the revenues of the United Kingdom and of British India. But I think it would have been far more to the purpose if he could have congratulated the working-men of Liverpool on this vast Empire being conducted in an orderly manner, on its laws being well administered and well obeyed, its shores sufficiently defended, its people prosperous and happy, on a revenue of 20,000,000*l*. The State indeed, of which Lord John Russell is a part, may enjoy a revenue of 100,000,000*l*., but I am afraid the working-men can only be said to enjoy it in the sense in which men not very choice in their expressions say that for a long time they have enjoyed 'very bad health.'

I am prepared to admit that it is a subject of congratulation that there is a people so great, so free, and so industrious, that it can produce a sufficient income out of which 100,000,000*l*. a-year, if need absolutely were, could be spared for some great and noble object; but it is not a thing to be proud of that our Government should require us to pay that enormous sum for the simple purposes of government and defence. Nothing can by any possibility tend more to the corruption of a Government than enormous revenues. We have heard lately of instances of certain joint-stock institutions with very great capital collapsing suddenly, bringing disgrace upon their managers, and ruin upon hundreds of families. A great deal of that has

arisen, not so much from intentional fraud, as from the fact that weak and incapable men have found themselves tumbling about in an ocean of bank-notes and gold, and they appear to have lost all sight of where it came from, to whom it belonged, and whether it was possible by any maladministration ever to come to an end of it. That is absolutely what is done by Governments. You have read in the papers lately some accounts of the proceedings before a Commission appointed to inquire into alleged maladministration with reference to the supply of clothing to the army, but if anybody had said anything in the time of the late Government about any such maladministration, there is not one of those great statesmen, of whom we are told we ought always to speak with so much reverence, who would not have got up and declared that nothing could be more admirable than the system of book-keeping at Weedon, nothing more economical than the manner in which the War Department spent the money provided by public taxation. But we know that it is not so. I have heard a gentleman—one who is as competent as any man in England to give an opinion about it—a man of business, and not surpassed by any one as a man of business, declare, after a long examination of the details of the question, that he would undertake to do everything that is done not only for the defence of the country, but for many other things which are done by your navy, and which are not necessary for that purpose, for half the annual cost that is voted in the estimates!

I think the expenditure of these vast sums, and especially of those which we spend for military purposes, leads us to adopt a defiant and insolent tone towards foreign countries. We have the freest press in Europe, and the freest platform in Europe, but every man who writes an article in a newspaper, and every man who stands on a platform, ought to do it under a solemn sense of responsibility. Every word he writes, every word I utter, passes with a rapidity, of which our forefathers were utterly ignorant, to the very ends of the earth; the words become things and acts, and they produce on the minds of other nations effects which a man may never have intended. Take a recent case; take the case of France. I am not expected to defend, and I shall certainly not attack, the present Government of France. The instant that it appeared in its present shape, the Minister of England conducting your foreign affairs, speaking ostensibly for the Cabinet, for his Sovereign, and for the English nation, offered his congratulations, and the support of England was at once accorded to the re-created French Empire. Soon after this an intimate alliance was entered into between the Queen of England, through her Ministers, and the Emperor of the French. I am not about to defend the policy which flowed from that alliance, nor shall I take up your time by making any attack upon it. An alliance was entered into, and a war was entered into. English and French soldiers fought on the same field, and they suffered, I fear, from the same neglect. They now lie buried on the bleak heights of the Crimea, and except by their mothers, who do not soon forget their children, I suppose they are mostly forgotten. I have never heard it suggested that the French Government did not behave with the most perfect honour to this Government and this country all through these grave transactions; but I have heard it stated by those who must know, that nothing could be more honourable, nothing more just, than the conduct of the French Emperor to this Government throughout the whole of that struggle. More recently, when the war in China was begun by a Government which I have condemned and denounced in the House of Commons, the Emperor of the French sent his ships and troops to co-operate with us, but I never heard that anything was done there to create a suspicion of a feeling of hostility on his part towards us. The Emperor of the French came

to London, and some of those powerful organs of the press who have since taken the line of which I am complaining, did all but invite the people of London to prostrate themselves under the wheels of the chariot which conveyed along our streets the revived monarchy of France. The Queen of England went to Paris, and was she not received there with as much affection and as much respect as her high position and her honourable character entitled her to?

What has occurred since? If there was a momentary unpleasantness, I am *quite sure that every impartial man* will agree that, under the peculiarly irritating circumstances of the time, there was at least as much forbearance shown on one side of the Channel as on the other. Then we have had much said lately about a naval fortification recently completed in France, which has been more than one hundred years in progress, which was not devised by the present Emperor of the French. For one hundred years great sums had been spent on it, and at last, like every other great work, it was brought to an end. The English Queen and others were invited over, and many went who were not invited. And yet in all this we are told that there is something to create extreme alarm and suspicion; we, who have never fortified any places; we, who have not a greater than Sebastopol at Gibraltar; we, who have not an impregnable fortress at Malta, who have not spent the fortune of a nation almost in the Ionian Islands; we, who are doing nothing at Alderney; we are to take offence at the fortifications of Cherbourg! There are few persons who at some time or other have not been brought into contact with a poor unhappy fellow-creature who has some peculiar delusion or suspicion pressing on his mind. I recollect a friend of mine going down from Derby to Leeds in the train with a very quiet and respectable-looking gentleman sitting opposite to him. They had both been staying at the Midland Hotel, and they began talking about it. All at once the gentleman said, 'Did you notice anything particular about the bread at breakfast?' 'No,' said my friend, 'I did not.' 'Oh! but I did,' said the poor gentleman, 'and I am convinced there was an attempt made to poison me, and it is a very curious thing that I never go to an hotel without I discover some attempt to do me mischief.' The unfortunate man was labouring under one of the greatest calamities which can befall a human creature. But what are we to say of a nation which lives under a perpetual delusion that it *is about to be attacked*—a nation which is the most combined on the face of the earth, with little less than 30,000,000 of people all united under a Government which, though we intend to reform it, we do not the less respect it, and which has mechanical power and wealth to which no other country offers any parallel? There is no causeway to Britain; the free waves of the sea flow day and night for ever round her shores, and yet there are people going about with whom this hallucination is so strong that they do not merely discover it quietly to their friends, but they write it down in double-leaded columns, in leading articles,—nay, some of them actually get up on platforms and proclaim it to hundreds and thousands of their fellow-countrymen. I should like to ask you whether these delusions are to last for ever, whether this policy is to be the perpetual policy of England, whether these results are to go on gathering and gathering until there come, as come there must inevitably, some dreadful catastrophe on our country?

I should like to-night, if I could, to inaugurate one of the best and holiest revolutions that ever took place in this country. We have had a dozen revolutions since some of us were children. We have had one revolution in which you had a great share, a great revolution of opinion on the question of the suffrage. Does it not read like madness that men, thirty years ago, were frantic at the idea of the people of

Birmingham having a 10*l.* franchise? Does it not seem something like idiotcy to be told that a banker in Leeds, when it was proposed to transfer the seats of one rotten borough to the town of Leeds, should say (and it was repeated in the House of Commons on his authority) that if the people of Leeds had the franchise conferred upon them it would not be possible to keep the bank doors open with safety, and that he should remove his business to some quiet place out of danger from the savage race that peopled that town? But now all confess that the people are perfectly competent to have votes, and nobody dreams of arguing that the privilege will make them less orderly.

Take the question of colonial government. Twenty years ago the government of our colonies was a huge job. A small family party in each, in connection with the Colonial Office, ruled our colonies. We had then discontent, and, now and then, a little wholesome insurrection, especially in Canada. The result was that we have given up the colonial policy which had hitherto been held sacred, and since that time not only have our colonies greatly advanced in wealth and material resources, but no parts of the Empire are more tranquil and loyal.

Take also the question of Protection. Not thirty years ago, but twelve years ago, there was a great party in Parliament, led by a Duke in one House, and by the son and brother of a Duke in the other, which declared that utter ruin must come, not only on the agricultural interest, but upon the manufactures and commerce of England, if we departed from our old theories upon this subject of Protection. They told us that the labourer—the unhappy labourer—of whom it may be said in this country,—

> 'Here landless labourers hopeless toil and strive,
> But taste no portion of the sweets they hive.'

—that the labourer was to be ruined; that is, that the paupers were to be pauperised. These gentlemen were overthrown. The plain, honest, common sense of the country swept away their cobweb theories, and they are gone. What is the result? From 1846 to 1857 we have received into this country of grain of all kinds, including flour, maize, or Indian corn—all objects heretofore not of absolute prohibition, but which were intended to be prohibited until it was not safe for people to be starved any more—not less than an amount equal in value to 224,000,000*l.* That is equal to 18,700,000*l.* per annum on the average of twelve years. During that period, too, your home growth has been stimulated to an enormous extent. You have imported annually 200,000 tons of guano, and the result has been a proportionate increase in the productions of the soil, for 200,000 tons of guano will grow an equal weight and value of wheat. With all this, agriculture was never more prosperous, while manufactures were never, at the same time, more extensively exported; and with all this the labourers, for whom the tears of the Protectionist were shed, have, according to the admission of the most violent of the class, never been in a better state since the beginning of the great French war.

One other revolution of opinion has been in regard to our criminal law. I have lately been reading a book which I would advise every man to read—the *Life of Sir Samuel Romilly*. He tells us in simple language of the almost insuperable difficulties he had to contend with to persuade the Legislature of this country to abolish the punishment of death for stealing from a dwelling-house to the value of 5*s.*, an offence which now is punished by a few weeks' imprisonment. Lords, bishops, and statesmen opposed these efforts year after year, and there have been some thousands of persons put to death publicly for offences which are not now punishable with death. Now, every man and woman in the kingdom would feel a thrill of horror if told that a

fellow-creature was to be put to death for such a cause.

These are revolutions in opinion; and let me tell you that when you accomplish a revolution in opinion upon a great question, when you alter it from bad to good, it is not like charitably giving a beggar 6*d.* and seeing him no more, but it is a great beneficent act, which affects not merely the rich and the powerful, but penetrates every lane, every cottage in the land, and wherever it goes brings blessings and happiness. It is not from statesmen that these things come. It is not from them that have proceeded these great revolutions of opinion on the questions of Reform, Protection, Colonial Government, and Criminal Law—it was from public meetings such as this, from the intelligence and conscience of the great body of the people who have no interest in wrong, and who never go from the right but by temporary error and under momentary passion.

It is for you to decide whether our greatness shall be only temporary or whether it shall be enduring. When I am told that the greatness of our country is shown by the 100,000,000*l.* of revenue produced, may I not also ask how it is that we have 1,100,000 paupers in this kingdom, and why it is that 7,000,000*l.* should be taken from the industry chiefly of the labouring classes to support a small nation, as it were, of paupers? Since your legislation upon the Corn-laws you have not only had nearly 20,000,000*l.* of food brought into the country annually, but such an extraordinary increase of trade that your exports are about doubled, and yet I understand that in the year 1856, for I have no later return, there were no less than 1,100,000 paupers in the United Kingdom, and the sum raised in poor-rates was not less than 7,200,000*l.* And that cost of pauperism is not the full amount; for there is a vast amount of temporary, casual, and vagrant pauperism that does not come in to swell that sum.

Then do not you well know—I know it, because I live among the population of Lancashire, and I doubt not the same may be said of the population of this city and county—that just above the level of the 1,100,000 there is at least an equal number who are ever oscillating between independence and pauperism, who, with a heroism which is not the less heroic because it is secret and unrecorded, are doing their very utmost to maintain an honourable and independent position before their fellow-men? While Irish labour, notwithstanding the improvement which has taken place in Ireland, is only paid at the rate of about 1*s.* a-day; while in the straths and glens of Scotland there are hundreds of shepherd families whose whole food almost consists of oatmeal porridge from day to day, and from week to week; while these things continue, I say that we have no reason to be self-satisfied and contented with our position; but that we who are in Parliament and are more directly responsible for affairs, and you who are also responsible, though in a lower degree, are bound by the sacred duty which we owe our country to examine why it is that with all this trade, all this industry, and all this personal freedom, there is still so much that is unsound at the base of our social fabric?

Let me direct your attention now to another point, which I never think of without feelings which words would altogether fail to express. You hear constantly, that woman, the helpmate of man, who adorns, dignifies, and blesses our lives, that woman in this country is cheap; that vast numbers whose names ought to be synonyms for purity and virtue are plunged into profligacy and infamy. But do you not know that you sent 40,000 men to perish on the bleak heights of the Crimea, and that the revolt in India, caused, in part at least, by the grievous iniquity of the seizure of Oude, may tax your country to the extent of 100,000 lives before it is extinguished; and do you not know that for the 140,000 men thus draughted off and consigned to premature graves,

nature provided in your country 140,000 women? If you have taken the men who should have been the husbands of these women, and if you have sacrificed 100,000,000*l.*, which as capital reserved in the country would have been an ample fund for their employment and for the sustentation of their families, are you not guilty of a great sin in involving yourselves in such a loss of life and of money in war, except on grounds and under circumstances which, according to the opinions of every man in the country, should leave no kind of option whatever for your choice?

I know perfectly well the kind of observations which a certain class of critics will make upon this speech. I have been already told by a very eminent newspaper publisher in Calcutta, who, commenting on a speech I made at the close of the session with regard to the condition of India and our future policy in that country, said, that the policy I recommended was intended to strike at the root of the advancement of the British Empire, and that its advancement did not necessarily involve the calamities which I pointed out as likely to occur. My Calcutta critic assured me that Rome pursued a similar policy for a period of eight centuries, and that for those eight centuries she remained great. Now, I do not think that examples taken from pagan, sanguinary Rome, are proper models for the imitation of a Christian country, nor would I limit my hopes of the greatness of England even to the long duration of 800 years. But what is Rome now? The great city is dead. A poet has described her as 'the lone mother of dead empires.' Her language even is dead. Her very tombs are empty; the ashes of her most illustrious citizens are dispersed—

'The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now.'

Yet I am asked, I, who am one of the legislators of a Christian country, to measure my policy by the policy of ancient and pagan Rome!

I believe there is no permanent greatness to a nation except it be based upon morality. I do not care for military greatness or military renown. I care for the condition of the people among whom I live. There is no man in England who is less likely to speak irreverently of the Crown and Monarchy of England than I am; but crowns, coronets, mitres, military display, the pomp of war, wide colonies, and a huge empire, are, in my view, all trifles light as air, and not worth considering, unless with them you can have a fair share of comfort, contentment, and happiness among the great body of the people. Palaces, baronial castles, great halls, stately mansions, do not make a nation. The nation in every country dwells in the cottage; and unless the light of your Constitution can shine there, unless the beauty of your legislation and the excellence of your statesmanship are impressed there on the feelings and condition of the people, rely upon it you have yet to learn the duties of government.

I have not, as you have observed, pleaded that this country should remain without adequate and scientific means of defence. I acknowledge it to be the duty of your statesmen, acting upon the known opinions and principles of ninety-nine out of every hundred persons in the country, at all times, with all possible moderation, but with all possible efficiency, to take steps which shall preserve order within and on the confines of your kingdom. But I shall repudiate and denounce the expenditure of every shilling, the engagement of every man, the employment of every ship which has no object but intermeddling in the affairs of other countries, and endeavouring to extend the boundaries of an Empire which is already large enough to satisfy the greatest ambition, and I fear is much too large for the highest statesmanship to which any man has yet attained.

The most ancient of profane historians has told us that the Scythians of his time were a very warlike people, and that they elevated an old cimeter

upon a platform as a symbol of Mars, for to Mars alone, I believe, they built altars and offered sacrifices. To this cimeter they offered sacrifices of horses and cattle, the main wealth of the country, and more costly sacrifices than to all the rest of their gods. I often ask myself whether we are at all advanced in one respect beyond those Scythians. What are our contributions to charity, to education, to morality, to religion, to justice, and to civil government, when compared with the wealth we expend in sacrifices to the old cimeter? Two nights ago I addressed in this hall a vast assembly composed to a great extent of your countrymen who have no political power, who are at work from the dawn of the day to the evening, and who have therefore limited means of informing themselves on these great subjects. Now I am privileged to speak to a somewhat different audience. You represent those of your great community who have a more complete education, who have on some points greater intelligence, and in whose hands reside the power and influence of the district. I am speaking, too, within the hearing of those whose gentle nature, whose finer instincts, whose purer minds, have not suffered as some of us have suffered in the turmoil and strife of life. You can mould opinion, you can create political power, —you cannot think a good thought on this subject and communicate it to your neighbours,—you cannot make these points topics of discussion in your social circles and more general meetings, without affecting sensibly and speedily the course which the Government of your country will pursue. May I ask you, then, to believe, as I do most devoutly believe, that the moral law was not written for men alone in their individual character, but that it was written as well for nations, and for nations great as this of which we are citizens. If nations reject and deride that moral law, there is a penalty which will inevitably follow. It may not come at once, it may not come in our lifetime; but, rely upon it, the great Italian is not a poet only, but a prophet, when he says,—

> 'The sword of heaven is not in haste to
> smite,
> Nor yet doth linger.'

We have experience, we have beacons, we have landmarks enough. We know what the past has cost us, we know how much and how far we have wandered, but we are not left without a guide. It is true we have not, as an ancient people had, Urim and Thummim —those oraculous gems on Aaron's breast—from which to take counsel, but we have the unchangeable and eternal principles of the moral law to guide us, and only so far as we walk by that guidance can we be permanently a great nation, or our people a happy people.

but we may live to see taxation grow up to 100,000,000*l.* a-year as heedlessly as we have seen it grow up to 70,000,000*l.*—whatever be the amount of our taxes, let us endeavour to do honestly by our countrymen; not pressing the poor, whether our taxes be heavy or light in the main; laying them on with a stronger and more resolute hand upon property, but in dealing with property, dealing just as honestly with its owners as we should deal with the poorest subjects of the realm. I take the taxes on successions of every kind—probate-duty, legacy-duty, and the tax levied under the Act of 1853—to be strictly in their nature property taxes. They are taxes which are collected or intended to be collected as part of every man's possessions and property which change hands on the death of their owner. Those who are poor—those whose means are nothing—of whom there are unfortunately many in this country—who make no wills, for whom no one takes out letters of administration, who have nothing to leave as a fortune or a little property to their children, are not directly interested in this matter; but all other classes of society are directly interested in it; and I say that, whether a man be employed in manufactures, or have property in land, in the Funds, or in Stocks and shares of any kind, he has a fair right to appeal to this House that in the imposition of taxes of this nature there should be the most just regard that is possible for the interests of all those whom the law is intended to affect.

I shall tell the House in a few words of what I complain, and what I shall move next year before anything be done to re-impose the income-tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in his budget speech of 1853, where he introduced that not very welcome guest to hon. Members opposite, the succession-tax, adverted to the probate-duty, which he said ought fairly to be levied upon all kinds of property, and not confined to one description alone. The hon. Member for Lambeth (Mr. W. Williams) has brought that duty repeatedly before the House, and has shown that 40,000,000*l.* or 50,000,000*l.*, if not more, have been paid into the Exchequer by taxes upon probates and legacies, all of which has been collected by taxes on personal property, but from which real and freehold property has been entirely exempted. I do not believe that any hon. Gentleman on the opposite side of the House feels that there ought to be this gross inequality. The probate-duty in 1858 raised to the Exchequer a sum of 1,338,000*l.*, and next session I shall ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer why it is not extended, as it ought to be, to all property which passes by death from one owner to another.

It was curious to observe that the right hon. Gentleman in his speech the other night—it was not quite so long as one he made before, but it was none the worse for that—did not refer to what was said to be the greatest effort of his financial genius. In 1853 everybody said there never was such a Chancellor of the Exchequer. He persuaded the country gentlemen to pass a Bill which inflicted upon them, as they allege, the very same succession-duty as the law imposed upon personal property. What did the right hon. Gentleman say upon that occasion? He calculated that in the following year, 1854, the succession-tax would produce 500,000*l.* to the Exchequer; in 1855 an additional 700,000*l.*; in 1856 an additional 400,000*l.*; and in 1857 an additional 400,000*l.* It will thus be seen that he anticipated the annual produce of this tax to amount in 1857 to 2,000,000*l.* If his calculation had turned out to be correct, the succession-duty would have yielded up to the present time no less a sum than 9,300,000*l.* What has been the actual result? I cannot give the exact figures, because the Board of Inland Revenue say they cannot separate that which has been received from the succession-tax of 1853 from that which has been received from the old legacy-duty. But, adopting the mode which was pursued

by the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other night, I can inform the House that the legacy-duty in 1852, before the succession-tax came into existence, produced 1,380,000*l*., whereas the legacy and succession duties combined yielded in 1859 the sum of 2,211,000*l*., being an increase of 831,000*l*. From that sum, however, I must deduct the increase of the ancient legacy-duty in the interval between 1853 and 1859, and I ought also to deduct something, but unfortunately I have no means of ascertaining what, for that description of property which the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1853 called rateable property, and which he withdrew from the legacy-duty, and put under the succession-tax at a much smaller amount. Passing that by, however, and deducting only 50,000*l*. for the increase of the old legacy-duty, I find that the succession-tax, from which the Chancellor of the Exchequer expected two years ago to receive 2,000,000*l*. a-year, brought in last year no more than 781,000*l*.

How came the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he that understands his business so well, to make so grievous a mistake as this? I shall tell the House how it was. It is an odd thing that he could make such a mistake, but it is still more odd how any one could be taken in by such a mistake when made. The tax was not what it pretended to be; it was not a succession-tax upon the value of property passing from one person to another, but something very different; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, while he undertook to adjust a great inequality, established another just as great and as offensive. I do not blame him for what he did; perhaps it was all he could do at the time; but surely he was deficient in acuteness when he supposed that his new tax would in 1857 produce 2,000,000*l*., whereas in 1859 it yielded only 781,000*l*. How the tax has been so unproductive is easily explained. If a man dies and leaves 10,000*l*., which is in the Funds, or in the North-Western Railway, or in ships, or in machinery, or employed in trade—what is done in reference to that 10,000*l*.? I will take the case of the 10 per cent. duty—that is where there is no kindred; 10,000*l*. left by one man to another, where there is no relationship, would have to pay a tax of 1000*l*. to the Exchequer. But, supposing the 10,000*l*. were invested in land, or in that rateable property which is the new distinction that the right hon. Gentleman establishes, what would be the result? Take two men, one twenty-two and the other eighty years of age. You would find that the Inland Revenue Board would turn to a table, which would say the man of eighty has a life worth three or four years only, and the man of twenty-two has a life worth twenty or twenty-five years; and they would then take the income from the 10,000*l*. and multiply it by the number of years supposed to remain to the young man and to the old man, and thus come to the sum on which each would have to pay.

I was fortunate enough to have a small property left to me by a person of whom I had no knowledge. I never saw him. He was an old gentleman, a great friend of peace, and opposed to the Russian war, and seeing that my hon. Friend the Member for Rochdale and myself were very strenuous in our opposition to that war, he did what was in his power to mark his opinion of the course we had taken. I sold the property for 1400*l*. or 1500*l*.; and when I came to pay my legacy-duty—that is, the succession-tax—I was greatly astonished at the small sum I had to pay. My age was taken; an estimate of the annual value of the property was made; and I was told that I had to pay something like 40*l*. or 50*l*. If the property had been in the Funds, or invested in any other of the modes to which I have referred, I should have had to pay 140*l*. at least. Take the case of an hon. Gentleman on this side of the House who has been more fortunate than myself. A property worth 32,000*l*. was left to him by a person who was not

He said he discovered—I am not now using his exact words—that he was making war against the mind of Europe. That is a most important and valuable admission, and I only wish the Emperor had found this out three or six months ago. He says, further, that the war was assuming dimensions with which the interests which France had in the struggle were not commensurate. I am surprised that a man reputed to be so acute did not perceive that he would be exposed to this great danger before he entered upon the war. But the two admissions made in this remarkable and memorable address prove to me that the suspicions which have been so studiously raised in this country as to the future objects of the Emperor of the French are altogether unfounded. I do not believe it possible for either the Emperor of the French or the Emperor of Austria to have returned home with all those scenes of horror, such as we have read of, flitting before their eyes, and I hope before their consciences, and to be now prepared to enter into another struggle—least of all a struggle with a nation like ours, containing 30,000,000 of united people, the most powerful, the richest, and, all things considered, perhaps the best satisfied with their Government of any nation in Europe.

Besides this, have they not learnt something from the improvements effected in weapons of warfare, and the increased destructiveness of life of which those weapons are now capable? They see now how costly war is in money, how destructive in human life. Success in war no longer depends on those circumstances that formerly decided it. Soldiers used to look down on trade, and machine-making was, with them, a despised craft. No stars or garters, no ribbons or baubles bedecked the makers and workers of machinery. But what is war becoming now? It depends, not as heretofore, on individual bravery, on the power of a man's nerves, the keenness of his eye, the strength of his body, or the power of his soul, if one may so speak; but it is a mere mechanical mode of slaughtering your fellow-men. This sort of thing cannot last. It will break down by its own weight. Its costliness, its destructiveness, its savagery will break it down; and it remains but for some Government—I pray that it may be ours!—to set the great example to Europe of proposing a mutual reduction of armaments. Our policy in past times—and the right hon. Gentleman did not go so far into this question as I could have wished—has been one of perpetual meddling, with perpetually no result except that which is evil. We have maintained great armaments, not, I sincerely believe, because we wanted to conquer or to annex any territory in Europe, but in order that whenever anything happens in Europe we may negotiate, intervene, advise, do something or other becoming what is called the dignity of this great country.

Do not you suppose this is precisely the language of the French Emperor at this moment? The Emperor of the French builds great fleets because you build great fleets; and then you build greater fleets because he builds great fleets. What does France want with great fleets? Precisely that which you have always wanted with yours. If there be any disturbance between any countries in Europe, do you not think it would be beneath the dignity of France not to take a part in it, and, taking a part in it, not to take a part with that influence and success which becomes a great country like France? And, therefore, without wishing any more than England wishes to make conquests or to annex territory, France wishes to have great influence in Europe because it suits its dignity, and will add to the glory and historical renown of its Emperor. Well, now, that is exactly the position in which we are, and we have no more right to blame the Emperor of the French than he has a right to blame us. We are both very silly, and I hope, from what I have heard to night, that at last we on our side the water are beginning to find this out.

I shall not go into the question

whether we are really about to be invaded. I am told that so much has been said about it that the French really believe we are making this outcry to cover our designs of invading them. I saw a letter in one of their newspapers this morning in which it is stated that from Dunkirk to some other town there are mounds and fortifications and guns all ready, though concealed from the eye by grassy banks, to repress and to frustrate our designs. Recollect that the French Government went into the Russian war because they were anxious to associate themselves with the foreign policy of England. Subsequently they went into another war with us with a more distant nation — they went into the war with China. They took part with the noble Viscount now at the head of the Government in the interference which he promoted in Italy with regard to Naples some two or three years ago. It appears to me, that looking at it from every point of view, reading the newspapers, and hearing what everybody has to say, if there be one thing which is more distinctly marked in the policy of the Emperor of the French since his accession to the throne of France than another, it is his perpetual anxiety, by every means consistent with his own safety, and with the interests as he believes of France, to ally himself with England and with the foreign policy of England. Well, if that be so, why should we perpetually create these suspicions, and generate in the minds of the people, nine-tenths of whom have small opportunity of ascertaining the facts, alarms which give colour and justification to this enormous increase of our armaments, of which we have heard such loud complaints from both sides of that table to-night?

I shall not go into the question of this Conference. At the first view my opinion would go very much with the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli). I doubt very much—indeed, I ought to say, I do not doubt, but I feel sure —that if England is to go into the Conference merely to put its name to documents which are of no advantage to Italy, which do not engage the sympathies of this nation, England had much better have nothing to do with it. But there is another course which I should like to recommend to the noble Lord who now holds the seals of the Foreign Office. I cannot believe that Frenchmen in matters of this nature are so very different from ourselves as some people wish to teach us. I do believe that the 36,000,000 Frenchmen engaged in all the honest occupations of their country, as our people are engaged here, are as anxious for perpetual peace with England as the most intelligent and Christian Englishmen can be for a perpetual peace with France. I believe, too, because I am convinced that it is his wisest course and his truest interest, that the Emperor of the French is also anxious to remain at peace with us, and the people in France are utterly amazed and lost in bewilderment when they see the course taken by the press, and by certain Statesmen in this country.

With that belief what would I do if I were in that responsible position?— for which, however, I know that I am thought to be altogether unfit—but if I were sitting on that bench and were in the position of the noble Lord, I would try to emancipate myself from those old, ragged, worthless, and bloody traditions which are found in every pigeon-hole and almost on every document in the Foreign Office. I would emancipate myself from all that, and I would approach the French nation and the French Government in what I would call a sensible, a moral, and a Christian spirit. I do not say that I would send a special envoy to Paris to sue for peace. I would not commission Lord Cowley to make a great demonstration of what he was about to do; but I would make this offer to the French Government, and I would make it with a frankness that could not be misunderstood if it were accepted on the other side it would be received with enthusiasm in England, and would be

marked as the commencement of a new era in Europe. I would say to the French Government, 'We are but twenty miles apart, the trade between us is nothing like what it ought to be, considering the population of the two countries, their vast increase of productive power, and their great wealth. We have certain things on this side, which now bar the intercourse between the two nations. We have some remaining duties which are of no consequence either to the Revenue or to Protection, which everybody has given up here, but they still interrupt the trade between you and us. We will reconsider these and remove them. We have also an extraordinarily heavy duty upon one of the greatest products of the soil of France—upon the light wines of your country.' The Chancellor of the Exchequer, and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman opposite, may start at once, and say that involves a revenue of 1,500,000*l*., or at least of 1,200,000*l*. The right hon. Gentleman talked of the national debt being a flea-bite. What is 1,200,000*l*.—what is 1,500,000*l*., if it be so much as that—what is 2,000,000*l*. for the abolition of the wine duties or their reduction to a very low scale, if by such an offer as this we should enable the Emperor of the French to do that which he is most anxious to do? The only persons whom the French Emperor cannot cope with are the monopolists of his own country. If he could offer to his nation 30,000,000 of the English people as customers, would not that give him an irresistible power to make changes in the French tariff which would be as advantageous to us as they would be to his own country? I do believe that if that were honestly done, done without any diplomatic finesse, and without obstacles being attached to it that would make its acceptance impossible, it would bring about a state of things which history would pronounce to be glorious.

The tone taken to-night by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire and by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will find a response in the country. I am not accustomed to compliment the noble Lord at the head of the Government. I have always condemned the policy which I thought wrong, but which, I have no doubt, the noble Lord thought was best calculated to promote the interests of the country. I believe he was mistaken, and that he was importing into this century the politics of the last; but I do not think it would be possible to select a Minister who could better carry out a policy which would be just to France, and beneficial to ourselves, than the noble Lord. Blood shines more, and attracts the vision of man more than beneficent measures. But the glory of such measures is far more lasting, and that glory the noble Lord can achieve. I live among the people. I know their toils and their sorrows, and I see their pauperism—for little better than pauperism is the lot of vast numbers of our countrymen from their cradles to their graves. It is for them I speak; for them I give my time in this assembly; and in heartfelt sorrow for their sufferings I pray that some statesman may take the steps which I have indicated. He who can establish such a state of things between France and England will do much to promote the future prosperity of two great nations, and will show that eighteen hundred years of Christian professions are at length to be followed by something like Christian practice.

TAX BILLS.

POWER OF HOUSE OF LORDS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JULY 6, 1860.

From Hansard.

[Mr. Gladstone's Budget of 1860 provided for the repeal of the Paper-duty. This portion of the Budget was rejected by the House of Lords. Subsequently, a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire for precedents as to the power of the Lords to deal with Money Bills. Mr. Bright served on that Committee, and drew up a report. The following speech was spoken on the Resolutions which were submitted to the House in pursuance of the report ultimately adopted by the Committee.]

I CANNOT help being struck with an inconsistency in the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Horsman) who has just resumed his seat. I am surprised that he has not concluded by moving that certain words in the first Resolution should be omitted, and in point of fact that the declaration which the House is about to make should be reversed. That would be in accordance with the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and with the sentiments which many Members opposite have most vociferously cheered. I confess I do not know what a number of hon. Gentlemen opposite thought of the statements of the right hon. Gentleman about the headlong, precipitate, and reckless Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because I think there were some fifty of them who were more enthusiastic supporters of that Budget than a great number of the Members on this side of the House.

I shall not follow the right hon. Gentleman in his endeavours to support his theories with regard to the extreme value of the House of Lords, nor shall I attempt to controvert them, because, in reality, that is not the question which is before the House. But, if the House will permit me, I will endeavour to keep as close to the question as I can, and I will state the grounds on which I am not satisfied with the course which this House is invited to take. I will not attack the Resolutions of the noble Lord, and I will not defend them, for I am not responsible for them. They appear to me unworthy of the occasion which is before us. I think they bear marks of having been prepared by more than one hand, and if they pass, and constitute the sole expression of our mind on this occasion, posterity will hardly fail to pronounce them the Resolutions of a somewhat degenerate House of Commons. The first Resolution is a very good one, but it is very old. It is none the worse for that; and I am glad the noble Viscount did not think it necessary to endeavour to amend it. The other two Resolutions are, to my

mind, somewhat ambiguous and feeble, and are not in their expression of what I believe is constitutional usage, any more than as examples of composition in the English language, to be compared to the first and oldest.

Last night we had two speeches from that side of the House after long silence—speeches which, I confess, I heard with some surprise and with some pain. They appeared to me marked—to use a favourite phrase of the right hon. Gentleman below me—by great recklessness, and, if I may so speak, with great levity. Whatever may be the opinion of hon. Members on this question, it is not one to be treated in that manner. It is a serious question—whether the powers of this House have been infringed or not, and whether the other House of Parliament shall hereafter exercise powers which it has never heretofore exercised. I confess I was compelled to think of the truth we learn from history, that there is no greater sign of the decadence of a people than when we find the leaders of parties and eminent statesmen treating great questions as if they were not great, and solemn realities as if they were not real at all. I think I could observe in those speeches the triumph of men who had found an advocate in the Prime Minister, whom they expected to meet as an opponent, and who were delighted that, acting with their confederates in the other House of Parliament, they were likely to obtain a signal party advantage.

Is there anybody who has denied in point blank terms, except the right hon. Gentleman, that the House of Lords, in the course it has taken, has violated—I will not say the privileges of this House, for privilege is a word not easily defined—but has broken in upon the usages of many centuries old—usages which our predecessors in this House have acknowledged to be of the utmost importance to our own powers and to the liberties of those whom we represent? If there was nothing wrong, then why was there a committee? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks neglected to answer that question. He made no opposition at the time; but three weeks afterwards he thinks that it would have been better if the committee had not been appointed. I will, however, undertake to affirm that, when the noble Viscount proposed that committee, every Member of this House thought the proposition a reasonable one. Why did we ransack the journals unless something had happened which jarred upon every man's sense of the rights and privileges of this House and the usages of the House of Lords? And why, having this committee, and instituting these researches, have we these Resolutions moved, not by a young, inexperienced, and unknown Member—if any such there be in the House of Commons—but by one of the oldest Members of this House, one of the ablest statesmen of the day, and at this moment the chief Minister of the Crown? Surely every one will admit that the circumstances were such as to justify the course that was taken in appointing the committee.

Then I have another reason to give to hon. Gentlemen opposite, notwithstanding their spasmodic cheering—I do not intend the word offensively—why we should have these very Resolutions which you are about to agree to, which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bucks, as far as I could understand, entirely approves, and which you all feel delighted should be proposed by the noble Viscount, because they relieve you from a considerable difficulty. I say that these Resolutions are a proof that the course which has been taken by the other House has been unusual, if not wrong; because the Resolutions by implication condemn what the Lords have done, and although they do not revoke the Act, or pledge this House to any particular course, yet, when those Resolutions come to be considered, it will never be denied that the House of Commons does by them express a unanimous opinion that the course which has been taken by the other House is contrary to usage, and is calculated to excite the

jealousy and alarm of the Members of this House.

I have been a member of that committee, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge knows my opinion of the committee and its labours. I think that committee fell wonderfully below its duties—that the course which it pursued was poor and spiritless; and at a future time when the course it has taken is contrasted with the course taken by the House of Commons on previous occasions, it will be justly said that there has been a real and melancholy declension in the spirit of this House. That which I complain of in the proceedings of the committee, I also complain of in respect to the manner in which some hon. Members have discussed this question. Half of the committee appeared to me to go into that committee as much the advocates of the House of Lords as of the House of Commons, and I find that some Members of this House are of the same character. Speeches have been delivered here that very few Members of the House of Lords would make on this question, and I will undertake to say that not one Member of that House, who is known to the public by his political influence, legal knowledge, high character, or extensive learning, would dare to make the speech that has been made to-night by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud. I went into the committee with the utmost frankness in order that I might ascertain, not altogether in what manner the Lords had asserted their privileges, but what our predecessors had done with regard to theirs. We have no right to let go one single particle of the privileges and powers which the House of Commons have gained in past times; and I took it for granted that if I examined for some centuries back the course which the House of Commons had pursued—if I read their Resolutions, if I read the reasons adduced at their conferences, if I observed the Acts which they passed, and the result of the discussions between the two Houses—we should be justified in concluding that we have rights to maintain for which our predecessors have contended.

Now, several Members, following the example of the committee, have taken the House back for a long period of time. I will not go into those precedents with the view of contending whether they do or do not refer to this particular case; but the House will permit me to mention two or three facts which I brought out of the Journals, and which convinced me that we should not take a sufficiently bold or decided course if we merely agree to the Resolutions of the noble Viscount. I will first refer to that very case which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge and myself fixed upon as the starting-point of our precedents—the precedents of the year 1407; and I trust every hon. Member has read it, either in the translation, or in the old Norman-French. It is worth reading, for it is a very curious case, and there is no other so like the recent action of the House of Lords as that which took place 453 years ago; for the House of Lords then proposed to continue a tax to which the Commons had not assented, and the House of Commons were greatly disturbed at the House of Lords prolonging a tax to which the House of Commons had not given its assent. We then made a great leap, and from the year 1407 came down to the year 1628. We then found the House of Commons insisting upon the initiation of Bills of Supply. They would not permit the name of the Lords to be inserted in the preamble of a Bill of Supply, neither would they agree to the compromise that neither the Lords nor the Commons should be introduced, but that the High Court of Parliament should be mentioned. The House of Commons refused to pass the Bill in that shape, and submitted that the Commons should be named alone in the grant. This was done, and that has been the practice ever since in the preamble of Supply Bills.

Then we come to 1640, when the House of Lords were much more modest than they ought to have been, according to the right hon. Gentleman, who maintains that they ought to check, alter, amend, improve, and if necessary overthrow, all the financial arrangements of the year that this House may agree to. The Declaration of 1640 set forth that the Lords stated at the Conference that—

'My Lords would not meddle with matters of subsidy, which belong naturally and properly to you—no, not to give you advice therein, but have utterly declined it.'

Then the House of Lords in 1640, we are asked to suppose, knew nothing of their constitutional rights, and the House of Commons of that day were less able than they are at present to judge of what is necessary for the performance of their proper functions in the State, and for the liberties of those whom they represent. Mr. Pym told their Lordships that they had not only meddled with matters of Supply, but that they had

'Both concluded the matter and order of proceeding, which the House of Commons takes to be a breach of their privilege, for which I was commanded to desire reparation from your Lordships.'

The Lords made reparation by declaring that they did not know they were breaking a right of the Commons in merely suggesting that Supply should have precedence over the consideration of grievances. I am not sure that even now, notwithstanding what has been said, the House of Lords have ever admitted by any Resolution that they have not the power to originate Supplies. They have not the power, of course, to carry such a Bill, because if it came to this House it would fall down dead, unless that unhappy time should come when the theories of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud are carried out.

Then comes the question of Amendments. The Lords endeavoured to amend a Bill of Supply. I do not wonder that they did so, because the theories of the right hon. Gentleman must have been palatable to a good many of them. In 1671 it was proposed not to continue a tax, but to reduce a tax—the duty on white sugar. The Lords proposed to reduce the duty from one penny per pound to five-eighths of a penny, and the House of Commons came to a Resolution that 'in all aids given to the King by the Commons the rate or tax ought not to be altered by the Lords.' A conference was held with the House of Lords, and the House of Commons then declared that the right which they claimed 'was a fundamental right, both as to the matter, the measure, and the time.' Then, what followed in the House of Lords? They replied by the very same Resolution which the House of Commons had passed in its own favour. The Resolution they passed asserting their power to make Amendments was just as strong, and in the same words as the Resolution which had been passed in a contrary sense by this House. They said, with reason, 'for if they cannot amend, or abate, or revise a Bill in Parliament'—they said this, mind, in answer to the Commons, who declared that they could not amend, but might negative the whole—they said, 'if we cannot amend, or abate, or alter in part, by what consequence of reason can we enjoy the liberty to reject the whole?'

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin last night showed himself a most unhappy critic. He called our attention to the condition of things in the United States. In fact, he proved himself—only he did not exactly understand what he was saying—he showed himself to be strongly in favour of Americanising our institutions in one respect. He said the Senate of the United States has the power not only of rejecting but of amending—which is quite true. When the founders of the American Republic were binding together the thirteen sovereign States in one great—and to be still greater—

combination, they looked back naturally to the practice of the country from which they were separating, to determine, or at least to learn, something from our Parliamentary practice. They found that in England the Lords could not begin Money Bills, could not alter or amend them; but that theoretically—because the matter had never been decided—theoretically they had power to reject. But, then, what was the conclusion which they came to? They said the very same thing that the House of Lords had said in the year 1671—'It is perfectly childish to say that the House of Lords cannot alter, abate, or increase, but *yet shall be able to reject*.' They knew well that, although there was that theoretical right in England, yet, practically, it had never been enforced, and they came to the conclusion that if they should give to their own Senate power to reject, it would be necessary also to give them the power to amend; and at this very moment the Senate of the United States might, not with that sort of responsibility of which the right hon. Gentleman is so fond, but with a real responsibility, every two members being the representatives of a particular sovereign State—that elected Senate does amend, and does reject, and does deal with finance in a manner which has never been permitted, nor even proposed in this country, except in the extraordinary speech to which we have just listened.

Seven years after the last date to which I have referred there arose another contest, in the course of which a Resolution was passed. It is the strongest and most comprehensive Resolution that the House of Commons has ever passed in relation to this subject. I will not go into any elaborate argument upon it, but I will just read it, because it makes the argument I am about to bring before the House more continuous and clear. The House of Commons declared this; and it was not one of those sudden acts which the House of Commons is now alleged to continually commit; but it was a Resolution drawn up by a committee specially appointed for that purpose—a Resolution specially considered and solemnly entered in the Journals of the House. It was in these words,—

'All Aids and Supplies, and Aids to His Majesty from Parliament, are the sole gifts of the Commons, and all Bills for granting such Aids and Supplies are to begin with the Commons; and it is the undoubted and sole right of the Commons to direct, limit, and appoint in such Bills the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations, and qualifications of such grants, which ought not to be changed or altered by the House of Lords.'

At this time, when the Lords had never pretended to reject a Bill, it is probable that such a proposition was a thing that never entered into the head of any Member of the House of Peers. I will undertake to say it would be difficult for any Member of this House to draw up a Resolution more comprehensive and conclusive as to the absolute control of the House of Commons than that of the year 1678, which I have just now read.

Shortly afterwards, in the year 1691, there is another Resolution which goes minutely to the case before the House, and I beg the right hon. Gentlemen's attention to it. In that year a Bill was passed for appointing Commissioners to Examine the Public Accounts of the Kingdom. The House of Lords amended, the House of Commons dissented; and among the reasons which the House of Commons gave was this—'That in aids, and supplies, and grants, the Commons only do judge of the necessities of the Crown.' What are we asked now? We are asked to take into partnership another judge of the necessities of the Crown. The House of Commons which for five hundred years, which, since the Revolution at least, has never withheld adequate Supplies from the Crown, is now to be depreciated and defamed, as if it had been guilty of scantily supplying the wants of the Crown, and the House of Lords

is to be asked to do that which the House of Commons alone did in 1691, namely, to judge of the necessities of the Crown, and to make the Supply *greater than* that which the House of Commons have believed to be sufficient. And, referring to that famous record of Henry the Fourth, we find it stated there that 'all grants and aids are made by the Commons, and are only assented to by the Lords.'

A few years afterwards, our forefathers were concerned in a question about the paper duties, just as we are at this time; *only they managed it* better than we are doing now. In the year 1699 they declared :—

'It is an undoubted right and privilege of the Commons, that such aids are to be given by such methods, and with such provisions, as the Commons only shall think proper.'

But now we are told that aids and provisions for the Crown are to be raised by methods, not which the Commons think proper, but which the Lords think proper in opposition to the Commons.

The House will perceive that I am very hoarse, and I am sorry to trouble them with other cases. In the year 1700 there was another question raised between the two Houses: and the Commons told the Lords that they could not agree with their Amendment, and they again affirmed that

'All the Aids and Supplies granted to His Majesty in Parliament are the sole and entire gift of the Commons; and that it is the sole and undoubted right of the Commons to direct, limit, and appoint the ends, purposes, considerations, limitations, and qualifications of such grants.'

And in 1702 there was another statement that 'the granting and disposing of all public moneys is the undoubted right of the Commons alone.'

In the year 1719 they objected to a clause which the Lords had introduced; on the ground that it levied a new subsidy not granted by the Commons, 'which is the undoubted and sole right of the Commons to grant, and from which they will never depart.' I want to ask the House, or any reasonable man, if we were discussing this question between the American Senate and the House of Representatives, or between the two Chambers of any foreign country, to what conclusion would each one of us necessarily come as to the purpose and object of all these declarations, to which I have referred, and which are only a portion of those which are to be found in the Journals of this House for the last five hundred years? Would you say that they lead to the conclusion that the House of Lords could throw out a Bill repealing a tax of the value and magnitude of 1,300,000*l.* a-year? Would you say that if they could not abate a tax, or continue a tax, or limit a tax, or dispose of a tax, or control in any way a tax, or even give advice to the Commons in respect of a tax—could you say that notwithstanding all that which is clear and undeniable, they could, in the face of this House, reject a Bill which repealed a tax of 1,300,000*l.* a-year, without violating Parliamentary usage, and running contrary to all the declarations of this House for many centuries? I think—and I put it before the Committee—and if any hon. Gentleman has done me the honour to read the draft Report which I prepared, he will see that I put before the Committee this long string of Cases, and Resolutions, and Declarations, couched in language not ambiguous, not feeble, but in language clear and forcible, which could not be mistaken; and then I wished to ask the Committee—as I now ask the House—what was the end and object which the House of Commons had in view in these repeated declarations of their rights and opinions touching the granting of Supplies, and the imposition of taxes upon the people? I should say that it was this—they confirm and consecrate a practice of five hundred years, the principle which, till within the last hour, I thought every

man in England admitted—the fundamental and unchangeable principle of the Government and Constitution of the English people, that taxation and representation are inseparable in this kingdom.

Let us look and see how these Declarations and Resolutions apply to this case. We are now in the year 1860, and for a long period we have had no question of importance of this nature; and we begin to fancy that, after all, there is no great importance in such a question. We have long had our personal liberties in this country—longer almost, in some classes of society, than history can tell; but people perhaps fancy that their personal liberty cannot be endangered by this matter. No; in this case we were so confident of our right and our power that we could not comprehend any infringement of our rights. These paper-duties, I believe, were granted in the reign of Queen Anne; partly for revenue, and partly for other purposes; which purposes, I presume, had some effect in procuring the rejection of this Bill by the Lords. It was a tax to prevent the publication and spread of political information. I see an hon. Gentleman up there in the gallery who is very much astonished at this; but he is not aware, probably, that all which I have stated is, if I am not misinformed, in the Preamble of the Bill. Public opinion in those days allowed of very bad reasons being given. They can be acted on now even when they are not given. From the time of Queen Anne, to the present time, this paper-duty has crippled a very important industry. It has taxed all the trades which required large quantities of paper—such as those of Manchester, of Sheffield, of Nottingham, of Birmingham, and elsewhere; but more than that, it has very successfully done what Queen Anne's Ministers wanted; it has threatened, and, to a large extent, it has strangled the press of this country. Within the last thirty years—and hon. Members on the opposite side of the House I presume by this time are becoming conscious of it—new principles have become established in this country with regard to taxation on industry. New and wiser principles have been adopted, and not only adopted but established; and there are some very powerful defenders of these new principles whom I have the pleasure to see opposite me to-night.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stroud has proceeded on the old mode of discussion when arguments are not plentiful and facts are entirely wanting. He has raised his old friend, the hobgoblin argument, and has tried to show us that some frightful calamity must come upon us if this paper-duty be repealed: it is but a million-and-a-quarter. Does any hon. Gentleman believe that our prosperity or success—or that any vast interest of this country—can possibly depend on a million, more or less, in the general revenue of the empire? A million is a million. ['Hear.'] I am glad to have said something in which the hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicestershire can coincide. There is no Member who has laid more stress on the importance of a million in the taxation of the people than I have done; it is the tax of many villages, of many towns; and it makes the difference sometimes between comfort and desolation; and therefore I am the last person who would undervalue the amount of a million of the public revenue. But still I should be only making myself foolish, if I were to say that a million sterling—whether our taxation be 50,000,000*l.* as it was twenty years ago, or 70,000,000*l.* as it is now—was of the gigantic importance attributed to it by the right hon. Gentleman; for on this million, which we had provided a substitute for, before we relieved the people of that million, he founds his argument as to our recklessness, precipitancy, and madness, and drunkenness—I think he added—at least it was to be inferred from what he said; for he made use of the converse, and spoke of sobriety.

The noble Lord the Member for the

City of London in his speech last night reviewed the course of events, and told us what we all knew, that within the recollection, I suppose, of almost the youngest Member of the House, there have been Excise duties on many other articles; I think, at one time, on candles; certainly at a later period on leather; I believe, since I came into this House, on glass; and, still more recently, on soap. Well, all these Excise duties have been abolished. Can you find a man, from John O'Groat's to the Land's End, who will not tell you that these reckless principles, applied to the repeal of these Excise duties, were not of essential benefit, not only to the particular trades most interested, but to the great mass of the people, and to the industry by which your people live?

Well, then, having followed for many years a course so beneficial, we come at length, in the year 1860, to the repeal of the paper-duty, which was promised by the House; which was recommended by the Government officers; which was called for by innumerable petitions; which was hoped for, I believe, by every person in the country who took an intelligent view of what was essential to aid the efforts which Government are making, by liberal grants every year, to promote the instruction of the people. This tax was 1,300,000*l*. It was a question whether sugar should be relieved to the extent of a million, tea of a million, or paper of a million: I am speaking in round numbers. The hon. Gentleman, not caring in the least about this reckless deficit, would evidently have preferred sugar or tea; but surely, as regards the question of the Supplies of the year, it was equally a matter of indifference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the duty were taken off tea, or sugar, or paper. But the conclusion to which be necessarily came was, that while in the cases of tea and sugar the relief was to the extent of a million of taxation, in the case of paper it was not only a relief to that amount in money, but it was a relief to a great industry, and to several other industries, whose prosperity must depend on an abundant and cheap supply of paper. I speak with some knowledge of the subject, and I have not the least doubt that the abolition of the paper-duty was a positive relief to the whole people of the country equal to double the relief which would have been afforded by a reduction equal in amount to the duty on the articles of tea and sugar.

But the question may be still more narrowed; and I beg the right hon. Gentleman's particular attention—for it appears now that his hostility to the Chancellor of the Exchequer renders him unable to understand the multiplication table, or anything else that is plain. If the paper-duty expired on the 15th of August, the reduction of revenue between that time and the end of the financial year would probably not be more than 600,000*l*., but certainly would not exceed 700,000*l*. I am sorry the House did not take more economical advice in past years. But we are now come, according to the right hon. Gentleman, to this extremity of our resources, that you cannot take 700,000*l*. this year from an Excise which is strangling a great trade, and put an additional halfpenny or penny on the income-tax, without bringing about such a frightful state of things, that the Constitution itself and the usage of Parliament must be violated, and we must bring in a foreign power to check us in our precipitous, reckless, and headlong career.

It may be very far from the modesty which becomes a Member of this House, but I confess I am of opinion that the House of Commons is the best judge in this country of what is necessary for the trade, and also what is required by the financial condition of the country. First of all, there are among us a good many sagacious men of all sorts. There are, as I know, some very sagacious landowners; we found it very hard to beat them, even when they had a very bad case. We have a very sagacious

Gentleman down here who spoke to-night, and who, whatever be the question which comes before us, always finds some very fitting object for his merciless and unscrupulous vituperation. We know, many of us intimately, all the details connected with these questions; in fact, I suppose, there is not a trade in this country of any importance or note that cannot find its representatives in this House. For many years past we have had the absolute control of questions of finance, and I undertake to declare, notwithstanding what the right hon. Gentleman has stated, that there is not a representative body in the world which during the last twenty years has done more in the way of financial and fiscal reforms with greater advantage to the people. And yet, at the end of that period, when the triumphs of this House are to be found not in granite and bronze monuments, but in the added comforts of the population, and in the increased and undoubted loyalty of the people, you are now, forsooth, asked by the right hon. Gentleman to abdicate your functions, and to invite 400 gentlemen, who are not traders, who have never been financiers, who do not possess means in any degree equalling your own of understanding the question—you are to ask them to join your councils, and not only to advise, but to check, and even to control.

It is one of the points which gave me most grief in regard to this question, that I have seen the House of Lords taking, of all cases, perhaps the worst that could possibly come before them, and inflicting suddenly, unexpectedly, and, in my opinion, groundlessly, most harsh and cruel treatment on all the persons who were interested directly in this question of the paper-excise. We are asked now, in terms not ambiguous, to overthrow the fabric which has grown up in this country, which has existed, and existed without damage, for at least 500 years. By the Report of the right hon. Gentleman we find that as far back as the year 1640 the House of Commons made this declaration, to which I ask the particular attention of Members of the present House. They said:—

'We have had uninterrupted possession of this privilege' [the privilege of the undisputed control over the taxation and finances of the country] 'ever since the year 1407, confirmed by a multitude of precedents both before and after, not shaken by one precedent for these 300 years.'

If that be so, it carries us back for a period of 520 years; and yet we are asked to-night, in the most unblushing and audacious manner, to overthrow this magnificent and time-honoured fabric, and admit to powers, to which they have hitherto been unaccustomed, the hereditary branch of the Legislature.

Now, I say that the House of Lords in the course they have taken have committed two offences, which I had much rather they had not committed, because I am not anxious that they should depreciate themselves in the eyes of the people of this country. [A laugh.] If hon. Gentlemen opposite were as anxious that they should continue limited to their proper functions, doing all the good that it is possible for them to do, and as little harm as possible, they would not laugh with an apparent unbelief in what I have just stated. I say the House of Lords have not behaved even with fair honour towards the House of Commons in this matter. Every man of them who knew anything about what he was voting for knew that the House of Commons repealed the paper-excise, not merely because it wished to remit a million of taxes, but because it thought that to strangle a great industry was an injurious mode of raising revenue, and, therefore, it transferred that amount of taxation from the paper-excise to the income-tax. Then, I say if that were known in the House of Lords, although they might have disapproved the change, and might have thought it better if it had not been made, it was not an honourable treatment of this House; and further, if they had the power which the American Senate has, and which the

right hon. and learned Gentleman wishes them to have, still it would not have been fair to this House to enact the additional penny on income, and to refuse to repeal the tax on paper. That is a question which every man can understand; and I cannot believe that there is any Member of this House who does not comprehend it when put in that shape.

But there is another thing in which the House of Lords have done wrong. They have trampled on the confidence and taken advantage of the faith of the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman last night made a very curious statement on this subject, which, if I were a Member of the House of Lords, I should be disposed to find fault with. He said:—'Why, what can you expect? It was the *lâches* of the House of Commons that gave the House of Lords the opportunity of doing what they have done.' But, surely, if for 500 years the House of Lords has never done this,—if since the Revolution, even with the search into precedents made by the Committee, not a single case which approaches this can be discovered,—is the House of Commons blameable for thinking that it was at least dealing with a House which would abide by the usages of the Constitution, and would not take advantage of the change which the House of Commons made for the public interest in the mode of imposing taxation? Instead of certain taxes being imposed annually, or for short periods, by which the House held a constant control over them, they were made permanent. The West India interest said they did not want their trade to be troubled and disturbed every year; and the sugar duties were made perpetual. But then are we always to treat the Lords as political burglars, and invent bolts, bars, locks, everything which may keep them from a possible encroachment on our rights? Must we treat them as men who, if you give them the smallest opportunity, will come down upon you and do that which you wish them not to do? If that be so, you must assuredly take certain precautions to prevent them from continuing such a course.

It is said that the Paper Duty Abolition Bill was thrown out in the Upper House by a great majority. That is a fact with which we are all well acquainted. I was talking recently to a Peer who gave an explanation of this which I will venture to repeat. 'If,' he said, 'the regular House of Lords, that is to say, the hundred Members who during the session really do transact the business, if they only had been in the House, the Paper Duties Repeal Bill would certainly have passed.' That, however, happened which we all understand, and I have no objection to repeat the exact words used to me. 'About two hundred Members, who hardly ever come there, were let loose for the occasion.' Most of them are unknown to the country as politicians, and they voted out this Bill by a large majority, with a chuckle, thinking that by doing so they were making a violent attack on the Ministry, and especially on the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That is a House, recollect, in which three Members form a quorum. I sometimes hear complaints in this House that Ministers pass measures very late at night, when, perhaps, only fifty Members are present, of whom thirty are connected with the Government; but in the House of Lords three form a quorum. Proxies may be used too; and these three Peers forming a quorum, with proxies in their pockets, are to dispose of great questions involving 70,000,000*l.* of taxes raised from the industry of the people of this country. At all events, if the two hundred Peers who voted that night choose to come down on other occasions, there is no single measure of finance, however liberal or however much for the advantage of the people, that they would not reject, and thus frustrate the beneficial intentions of this House.

But after all I have said I am going to make this admission, that the Lords of course can reject a Bill, and can also initiate a Bill if they like. If it were not so late (and the Lords like to get

away about seven)—if it were not so late, the Lords might to-night bring in a Bill levying a tax or voting money for the service of the year, and they can also reject any Bill you may send up to them. They are omnipotent within the four walls of their House, just as we are within the four walls of this House. But if they take their course, one contrary to the general practice of that House and of Parliament, it becomes us to consider what course we will take. We cannot compel them to make any change; but we may ourselves take any course that we please, and we may at least offer them the opportunity of altering the course they have taken.

My opinion is that it would have been consonant with the dignity of this House, wholly apart from the question of 1,300,000*l.* a-year, or of 700,000*l.* the sum for this year, to have passed another Bill to repeal the paper-duty. If that had been a duty which I considered not the best to repeal, I still should have laid aside all partiality for a particular tax. The question before us is of far more importance than the maintenance or abolition of any particular tax. There can be nothing more perilous to the country, or more fatal to the future character of this House, than that we should do anything to impair and lessen the powers we have received from our predecessors. I understand there are other sums amounting to about 1,500,000*l.* or 2,000,000*l.* which have yet to go up to the House of Lords. Now, if the noble Lord at the head of the Government, acting up to his position, which I think he has failed to do in this matter, had asked us, not on the ground (for that is a low ground) that the paper-duty was the best duty to repeal, but on the ground that as the House of Commons have come to that decision they should abide by it; but if he had asked us to pass another Bill, with an altered date, perhaps, and sent it up again to the House of Lords, he would have given them the opportunity of reconsidering their decision; and my full belief is that a course like this, taken without passion and without collision, would have been met in a proper temper by that House; this difficulty would have been got over, and in all probability both Houses for the future would have proceeded more regularly and easily than they are likely to do under the plan proposed by the noble Lord.

Having stated that I shall leave the questions of these Resolutions, I say there is no reason whatever in the arguments which have been used why this duty should have been maintained, or why it was perilous to remit it. Its repeal was consistent with the policy of the Whigs before Sir Robert Peel came into power, with the policy of Sir Robert Peel's Government, of Lord Derby's Government, of Lord John Russell's Government, of Lord Aberdeen's Government, of Lord Palmerston's Government, of Lord Derby's last Government, and of the existing Government. The policy of the repeal of the paper-duty is the recognized policy of this House, and it is the admitted interest of this country. Then, why, unless it be for a party triumph, unless it be to attack a particular Minister, why is this question of 700,000*l.* this year, and less than double that sum in future years, raised to an importance which does not belong to it? and why, for the sake of a party triumph, are the great interests connected with it to be damaged and tortured, as they now are, by the action of one House of Parliament? I am told there are Members of this House who would not support the Government in this course, and I should certainly hardly expect that all the Gentlemen on the benches opposite would lend it their sanction. Yet I doubt whether if the noble Lord at the head of the Government were to act in the manner I have indicated, the great majority of them would be induced, upon reflection, to adopt the policy which they have pursued with respect to these Resolutions, and whether the House of Commons would not have passed a second

Bill even by a larger majority than that by which we passed the last.

There is a rumour that some Gentlemen on this side of the House object to such a course of proceeding, and hon. Gentlemen opposite have, perhaps, on that account been led to take up a line of action upon this question in which they otherwise could not hope to succeed. An hon. Gentleman behind me, from whom I should have expected something better, said only last night, in speaking of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he was a reckless and unsafe Finance Minister. That observation he no doubt confined to the question of the repeal of the paper-duty; but I cannot forget that in 1853 we had the same Chancellor of the Exchequer as to-day, and that it was asserted then also that he had committed great errors. [Cheers from the Opposition.] Yes; but your Chancellor of the Exchequer was not in office long enough to perpetrate any great mistakes. Not long after that right hon. Gentleman acceded to office, he brought in a Budget which the House of Commons rejected; and upon the next occasion on which he proposed one, he found it necessary to shift the burden of responsibility to the shoulders of his successor. But in 1853, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Oxford was Chancellor of the Exchequer, I put it to those among us who were then Members of this House, whether it is not the fact that the strength of the Government of Lord Aberdeen, of which he was a Member, was not mainly to be attributed to his dealing with the taxation of the country in a manner which met with universal approbation out of doors?

We come now to the present year, and while I do not wish to depreciate the popularity, or the character, or the ability of the noble Lord at the head of the Government, or any of his colleagues, still I undertake to say that the power and authority which his Administration has acquired during the present session, it has gained mainly as the consequence of the beneficial propositions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made. I heard somebody last night—I am not quite sure it was not the right hon. Gentleman below me to-night — talk of the House of Commons having been partly charmed and partly coerced into the acceptance of these propositions. But if that be so, and if we have proved ourselves to be soft-headed children who could be so swayed, I must say it appears to me very strange that such should be the case; for I think the House of Commons has upon the contrary shown wonderful independence, and has proved itself to be extremely free from all those ties, the acting in accordance with which usually enables a Government to conduct the business of a session with success. Be that, however, as it may, I repeat that the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when it was laid before the country, was received throughout all the great seats of industry, and among the farmers too—for it tended to benefit them as well as the inhabitants of towns—with universal approbation.

The right hon. Gentleman below me has been indulging himself to-night, in accordance with his custom, in condemning the French Treaty, and I must say we have heard a great deal upon that subject since it was first mooted in this House. We have had it commented upon by a great journal in this country, whose motives I will not attempt to divine, but whose motto must, I think, be that which Pascal said ought to have been adopted by one of the ancients — 'Omnia pro tempore, sed nihil pro veritate,'—which being translated, may be rendered—'Everything for the *Times*, but nothing for truth.' We have had, in short, every description of falsehood propounded with respect to this Treaty. The right hon. Gentleman below me has not hesitated to-night to give currency to representations with respect to it which are wholly inaccurate, and to which, if I were not here, I would apply a still stronger

term. Did not the right hon. Gentleman say our manufacturers were—I forget the word—plaintiffs—no, suppliants in the antechamber of the Emperor of the French? The statement is one, I can tell him, which is wholly untrue: nay, more,—and I may say that with the exception of some right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Treasury bench, there is no one more competent to give an opinion on the subject than myself, for reasons with which the House is of course acquainted,—I tell the right hon. Gentleman that nothing can exceed the good faith and the liberality with which that whole question is being treated by the Commissioners of the French Government. I would have him know that they are as anxious as our Commissioners that a great trade between England and France should spring up; and I will add that in the case of nations and Governments in amity one with the other, whose representatives are endeavouring in all fairness and frankness to extend the commerce between both, he is neither a statesman nor a patriot who seeks to depreciate in the eyes of his countrymen the instrument by which it is hoped these results will be accomplished, and who thus does his utmost to prevent its success.

I come now to ask the House what is this reform in the tariff introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by which you are so frightened? Is it something novel? The right hon. Gentleman below me says it is a scheme both new and gigantic in its proportions, and fatal in its principle. I was speaking last week to an hon. Member for a south-western county who sits on the benches opposite, and he spoke in terms of exultation to me of the success of late years of that branch of industry in which you are peculiarly interested. Is it honest, then, that you should make such acknowledgments and not consent to extend further the principles which the whole country has pronounced to be sound and beneficial? We boast of the freedom of our commerce. That commerce has more than doubled since I had first the honour of a seat in this House. When, therefore, you now attack, through the Chancellor of the Exchequer, principles, the adoption of which has wrought this great good, you are not, in my opinion, pursuing a course which will enhance your reputation with the country which you profess to represent. There is not, I contend, a man who labours and sweats for his daily bread; there is not a woman living in a cottage, who strives to make her humble home happy and comfortable for her husband and her children, to whom the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer have not brought hope, and to whom his measures, which have been defended with an eloquence few can equal, and with a logic none can contest, have not administered consolation. I appeal to the past and present condition of the country, and I ask you, solemnly, to oppose no obstacle to the realization of those great and good principles of legislation.

I will not enter further into this question. I am unable from physical causes to speak with clearness, and I am afraid I must have somewhat pained those who have heard me. I must, however, repeat my regret that the noble Viscount at the head of the Government has not shown more courage in this matter than he appears to me to have exhibited, and that the House of Commons has not evinced more self-respect. I fear this session may as a consequence become memorable as that in which, for the first time, the Commons of England has surrendered a right which for 500 years they had maintained unimpaired. I, at least, and those who act with me, will be clear from any participation in this; we shall be free from the shame which must indelibly attach to the chief actors in these proceedings. I protested against the order of reference which the noble Lord proposed, though I sat and laboured on the Committee with earnest fidelity on

behalf of the House of Commons. I have felt it an honour to sit in this House up to this time, and I hope that hereafter the character of this House will not be impaired by the course which is about to be taken. I have endeavoured to show to my countrymen what I consider to be almost the treason which is about to be committed against them. I have refused to dishonour the memory of such Members as Coke and Selden, and Glanville and Pym; and, if defeated in this struggle, I shall have this consolation, that I have done all I can to maintain the honour of this House, and that I have not sacrificed the interests which my constituents committed to my care.

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PUNISHMENT OF DEATH.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 3, 1864.

From Hansard.

[Spoken on Mr. Ewart's Motion for the Abolition of the Punishment of Death.]

I SHALL not, after the discussion which has taken place, and which has been, I think, almost all on one side, take up the time of the House by making a speech. But the right hon. Gentleman (Sir George Grey) has said something which I am obliged to contest to some extent. He has quoted the opinions of Judges upon this question, and he has laid, I think, more stress upon those opinions than they generally deserve. I think, if there is one thing more certain than another, it is this — that every amelioration of the criminal code of this country has been carried against the opinion of the majority of the Judges.
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seemed to say that the question, whether capital punishment should be continued or be abolished, was not one which a Committee of this House was fitted to consider; but towards the close of his speech he moderated that by admitting that some of the points referred to in the Amendment, which is, I suppose, to be agreed to, might be considered by a Commission. I will undertake to say that if he were to inquire in every civilized country in the world where there is a representative legislative assembly, he would find that the changes which had been made in their laws have been made invariably in consequence of inquiries instituted by those Chambers and carried on by means of Committees formed amongst their members.

I admit that the bulk of the Committees of this House are not fairly constituted. I served very assiduously on
for Committees for the first ten or fifteen
England after I became a Member of this
for 500 years I did not find out till about
impaired. I, or 1853 that a Committee
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the Committee of this nature, where we

as I understand, that the law in Belgium does not prohibit capital punishments; but the result of omitting to inflict capital punishment has been so satisfactory that now the law is literally obsolete, and that capital punishment is never inflicted. Take then the case of Bombay, which is of a very striking character. We have the evidence from the pen of Sir James Mackintosh, who says,—

'It will appear that the capital crimes committed during the last seven years (1804 to 1811) with no capital executions, have in proportion to the population not been much more than a third of those committed in the first seven years (1756 to 1763) when forty-seven persons suffered death.'

He adds,—

'The intermediate periods lead to the same results.'

The House ought to bear in mind, that to us who have examined this question for many years, no fact is more clearly demonstrated than this—there is no country in the world, be it a great empire or be it a small state, where the law has been made milder and capital punishment has been abolished, in which there is any proof that murders have been more frequent, and the security of life in the slightest degree endangered. If that be so—if I could convince every Member of this House that the abolition of capital punishment would not cause more murders than the average of the last ten years—if all that would be left would be that those ten or twelve wretches who are publicly strangled every year would be living in some prison, or engaged in some labour with a chance of penitence, and with life not suddenly cut off by law—is there a man in this House—I speak not of party, or to one side or the other—who would dare to demand that we should still continue these terrible punishments?

There was, not long ago, in this House, a venerable old Gentleman who represented the University of Oxford, who constantly quoted in the discussion on this subject a certain verse of a certain chapter in the Book of Genesis. I am very glad that in the seven or eight years that have elapsed since this question was last discussed, we have advanced so far that nobody has now brought forward that argument. We have discussed it to-night by the light of proved experiments, of facts, and of reason. Seeing what has been done in this country by the amelioration of the Criminal Code, and what has been done in all other countries, is there any man with one particle of sense or the power of reason who believes that human life in this country is made more secure because ten or twelve men are publicly put to death every year?

The security of human life does not depend upon any such miserable and barbarous provision as that. The security for human life depends upon the reverence for human life; and unless you can inculcate in the minds of your people a veneration for that which God only has given, you do little by the most severe and barbarous penalties to preserve the safety of your citizens. If you could put down what it is that secures human life in figures and estimate it at 100, how much of it is to be attributed to your savage law, and how much of it to the reverence for human life implanted or existing in the human soul? No doubt 5 or 10 out of the 100 may be owing, for aught I know, to the influence of the law; but 90 or 95 per cent. is owing to that feeling of reverence for human life. Whenever you hang a man in the face of the public under the circumstances to which we are so accustomed in this country, if you do in the slightest degree deter from crime by the shocking nature of the punishment, I will undertake to say that you by so much—nay, by much more—weaken that other and greater security which arises from the reverence with which human life is regarded.

Since the notice of this Motion was given by my hon. Friend I took the

liberty of writing to the Governors of three of the States of America in which capital punishment has for several years been abolished; and, with the permission of the House, I will read extracts from the answers which I have received. I think they are important in a discussion of this nature when we are attempting to persuade doubtful and timid people that we are not proposing a rash or dangerous change. In the State of Rhode Island, one of the small States of America, with a population of not more than 200,000, capital punishment has been abolished. The Governor, the Hon. J. Pye Smith, writing from the Executive Department, March 21, 1864, says:—

'1. The death penalty was abolished in this State in the year 1852. 2. I do not think its abolition has had any effect upon the security of life. 3. Is the law against the death penalty sustained by the public opinion of the State? Very decidedly. 4. Are convictions and punishments more certain than before the change was made? I think they are. 5. What is the punishment now inflicted on such criminals as were formerly punished with death?* Imprisonment for life at hard labour. I have conversed with our Supreme Judge, State attorney, and warden of the State prison, and they support my own established views upon the subject.'

In a second letter, dated April 4, and which I received a few days ago, he says:—

'Our present able Chief Justice says:—"Although opposed to the present law when passed, I am equally opposed to a change in it until the experiment has been tried long enough to satisfy us that it has failed. I am clearly of opinion that the present state of the law is sustained by public opinion, and I believe it will continue to be until it is satisfactorily shown that crimes against life have been considerably increased in consequence of it. My observation fully justifies me in saying that conviction for murder is far more certain now in proper cases than when death was the punishment of it."'

Here is the answer which I received from the Hon. Austin Blair, the Governor of the State of Michigan:—

'Executive Office, Lancing,
'March 23, 1864.

'1. The death penalty for murder was abolished March 1, 1847, when the revised statutes of 1846 went into effect. 2. Life is not considered less secure than before; murders are probably less frequent in proportion to population. Twenty years ago the population of the State was 300,000, and we have now a population of about 900,000. Then it was chiefly agricultural, and now we have mines of copper, iron, coal, &c., bringing into proximity dissimilar classes, and increasing the probabilities of frequent crime. Before the abolition of the death penalty, murders were not unfrequent, but convictions were rarely or never obtained. It became the common belief that no jury could be found (the prisoner availing himself of the common law right of challenge) which would convict. Since the abolition there have been in seventeen years thirty-seven convictions. 3. There can be no doubt that public opinion sustains the present law and is against the restoration of the death penalty. 4. Conviction and punishment are now much more certain than before the change was made. Murder requires a greater amount of proof than any other crime, and it is found practically that a trial for murder excites no very unusual interest.'

It, therefore, does not make a hero of the criminal. The letter proceeds:—

'5. The punishment now is solitary confinement at hard labour for life. Since 1861 this class of prisoners have been employed as other prisoners, as it was found difficult to keep them at work in cells without giving them tools, and there was danger of their becoming insane. The reform has been successfully tried, and is no longer an experiment.'

The last letter is from the Hon. J. S. Lewis, the Governor of Wisconsin, and is dated Madison, March 29, 1864:—

'The evil tendency of public executions,

the great aversion of many to the taking of life rendering it almost impossible to obtain jurors from the more intelligent portion of the community, the liability of the innocent to suffer so extreme a penalty and be placed beyond the reach of the pardoning power, and the disposition of courts and juries not to convict, fearing the innocent might suffer, convinced me that this relic of barbarism should be abolished. The death penalty was repealed in 1853. No legislation has since re-established it, and the people find themselves equally secure, and the public more certain than before. The population in 1850 was 305,000; in 1860 it was 775,000. With this large increase of population we might expect a large increase of criminal cases, but this does not appear to be the case.'

If you take these two States of Wisconsin and Michigan, which have been settled at a comparatively recent date, you will see that it was highly probable, as they are on the outskirts of advancing civilization, that crimes of violence would not be uncommon. But here, with the abolition of this punishment, crimes and violence are not more common than before; people are just as secure, the law is upheld by public opinion, and the elected Governors of three States, after the experience of these years, are enabled to write me letters like these, so satisfactory and so conclusive with regard to the effect of the experiment as it has been tried with them.

The special cases that have been mentioned to-night with regard to executions have not been by any means the most fearful that have occurred. There was a case last year at Chester of so revolting a nature that I should be afraid to state the details to the House. I think it is hardly conceivable that a Christian gentleman, a governor of a gaol, and a clergyman, another Christian gentleman, should be concerned in such a dreadful catastrophe as then took place. Sir, if there be fiends below, how it must rejoice them to discover that, after the law of gentleness and love has been preached on earth for eighteen hundred years, such a scene as that could be enacted in our day in one of the most civilized and renowned cities of this country. And these are cases which will happen again if this law remains; and all the difficulties which the right hon. Gentleman has alluded to to-night and on previous occasions are difficulties inseparable from the continuance of this punishment.

The right hon. Gentleman has referred to one or two cases; the noble Lord opposite (Lord Henry Lennox) has likewise referred to one or two. The case at Glasgow, the case at Derby, the recent case in London, and the recent case at Warwick, are cases which move whole populations; and, if that be so, how can any man argue that this law is in a satisfactory state, or that this punishment can be wisely and beneficially administered and executed in this country? Parliament, unfortunately—we need not disguise it, and I will not at any rate conceal it—Parliament has been very heedless upon this question. Secretaries of State have gone on from year to year in the performance of their duties with great pain to themselves, and yet they have never had the courage to ask Parliament to consider whether the system might not be entirely abolished. Does not every man now feel that it is in opposition to the sentiment of what I will call—and I think I may say it without disparaging anybody—the most moral and religious population of this country, the men who have led the advance during the past century in every contest that we have had with ignorance, and crime, and cruelty, in whatsoever shape it has shown itself? And every day they are becoming more and more estranged from the spirit and operation of this law.

Whenever there are paragraphs floating about in the newspapers that on the 15th or the 25th of such a month such an one is to meet his doom for some crime, however foul, there is in every city, in every parish, and in almost

every house in this country where there is any regard to humanity and to Christianity, a feeling of doubt as to whether this law is right, and a feeling of disgust and horror amongst hundreds of thousands of the best portion of our people. Now, merciful laws are, in my opinion, the very highest testimony to any Government, as I likewise think that they are the highest blessing a people can enjoy. I believe they give security to a Government, and they soften and humanise the people. All the steps that have been taken in this direction have been so successful, that I wonder that even the hon. gentleman the late Lord Mayor of London should not himself have come to the conclusion that after all we could still sleep comfortably in our beds if men were not hanged; and that, if the law were gentle and merciful whilst it was just, we should find gradually growing up in the minds of all classes a greater dislike to crime and violence, and a greater reverence for human life.

Benjamin Franklin, a great authority on matters of this nature, said that the virtues are all parts of a circle; that whatever is humane is wise; whatever is wise is just; and whatever is wise, just, and humane, will be found to be the true interests of States, whether criminals or foreign enemies are the objects of their legislation. Would any one of us like to go back to the barbarism of that time when Charles Wesley wrote a note to the celebrated and excellent John Fletcher, the Vicar of Madeley, in 1776? We were then trying to keep the empire together, and neglecting this great work at home. He says:—

'A fortnight ago I preached a condemned sermon to about twenty criminals, and every one of them, I had good grounds to believe, died penitent. Twenty more must die next week.'

And there were then occasions on which twenty were hanged, not one of whom had been convicted of the crime of murder. Have we not from that time made great and salutary and satisfactory advances in this question? Is there any man who wants to turn back to the barbarism of that day? But if you turn back to the Secretaries of State of that day, or to the Judges of that day, or even to the Bishops of that day, you will find that they had just the same sort of arguments in favour of the barbarism in which they were then concerned that the right hon. Gentleman, I suppose forced by the necessities of his office, has offered to the House to-night.

I confess I wonder that all the right hon. Gentleman has gone through in these painful cases has not almost driven him stark mad many times. I wonder that it has not driven him to the table of this House to propose, under the solemn feelings with which he must often have been impressed, that the House should take into consideration whether this vast evil—as I believe it to be—might not be put an end to. Is the Englishman worse than every other man? Is this nation worse than other nations? Cannot the lenient laws practised with perfect safety in every other—not every other, but in many other of the nations of the world—be practised in this nation, and at the same time leave us perfectly secure—at least as much so as we are at present? I say we may wash vengeance and blood from our code without difficulty and without danger.

The right hon. Gentleman is willing to appoint a Commission—he prefers it to a Committee, and I will not contest the point with him if the Commission be a fair Commission; but I should not like to see it a Commission of Judges. I do not wish to speak disrespectfully of Judges. I agree with what the right hon. Gentleman has said, that with the exception of a case or two, perhaps, in one's lifetime, we notice nothing on the bench but that which is honourable to the Judges of this country; and I would say that the Judges of this country may be compared with advantage probably with the Judges of any other country. But Judges are but men. Several of

ment. That is not the state of things which prevailed in this country fifty or sixty years ago. We know, therefore, as respects this class of persons, who can always obtain as much of these pernicious articles as they desire to have, because price to them is no object, that temperance has made great way, and if it were possible now to make all classes in this country as temperate as those of whom I have just spoken, we should be amongst the very soberest nations of the earth.

But it may be said after all this, that there is something still to be done by special legislation—and I am not disposed to contradict that; and if any Member were to contradict it, it would be going in the face of experience, and certainly in the face of the opinion which has been universally held by this House. All our legislation on this question has been special. My hon. Friend says he thinks no one would dare to propose to make the sale of intoxicating drinks free—as free for example as the sale of bread, potatoes, or any of the articles of ordinary consumption. If we required no taxes, I do not know how we should treat this question; but, requiring taxes as we do, it has been thought in this country, and I suspect in most other countries too—certainly in many—that there is nothing upon which taxes can be levied with greater advantage (if I may use the term 'advantage' in connection with the levying of any taxes) as upon articles of an intoxicating quality. But having levied these taxes, and finding the consumption is large, the Government finds it also necessary to provide certain superintendence by the police; because, unfortunately, wherever the sale of these articles is considerable, there is found to be a state of things which is not favourable to obedience to the law, and which magistrates, policemen, and the law are called in to avert and prevent.

We have this special legislation now, and my hon. Friend says that not less than four hundred Acts of Parliament dealing with this question have been before the House: not all of them with a view of preventing the consumption of intoxicating liquors, but all showing what a constant and incessant attention Parliament has been obliged to pay to this subject. Now we come to the system as we find it, and ask ourselves, Can anything more be done? Under the present system, if a man wishes to sell beer only, he gets six of his neighbours to sign a recommendation that he is a suitable and respectable man. I believe also the rent of his house has something to do with it, as indicating that he is a man not absolutely without means and character. But if he wishes to sell wine and spirits he must ask the magistrates for a licence, and the licence is renewable from year to year. I think it may be generally said that this system is not satisfactory to people throughout the country. There are many magistrates who condemn the system of which they are a part; and in many towns it is said—and I think upon inquiry we should find it to be true—that the magistrates give licences too freely; and men who live in quiet streets of a town are angry with the magistrates for giving licences to houses which are not needed. We also find that there is a great diversity of action, for in some villages, towns, and districts, public houses are much more numerous than in others; and at the same time there is a complaint that in giving licences for the sale of beer the recommendation of six benevolent neighbours is given more through kindness to the applicant than kindness to the great bulk of the neighbourhood. In some cases the number of beer-houses has been unnecessarily and mischievously increased.

And now what does my hon. Friend propose? He proposes something that is entirely distinct, and to some extent a revolutionary measure, with regard to this system. He proposes that two-thirds of the rate-payers of any district, parish, or town shall have the power to decide the whole of this question; and I think when the hon. Gentleman stated

that proposal, an hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House, and an hon. Gentleman sitting near me, made gestures as if they thought the rate-payers did not represent the working-classes. But the working-classes are rate-payers in a larger number than any other class, for they are generally married and have families, and live in houses that pay taxes; and therefore if you take the opinion of the rate-payers of this country on any question, you take in as clear a manner as possible the opinion of the people of the country. Well, my hon. Friend proposes that two-thirds shall decide;—but decide what? By this Bill, they are to decide first of all whether any new licences shall be granted in the district to which the vote applies—that is, whether this Act shall be in force in the district—and they are to decide further whether any of the persons now licensed shall have those licences renewed at the expiration of the present year. ['No, no!' 'Hear, hear!']

That is what I understand by the Bill. I believe all licences are merely granted for selling drink from year to year. I think it was one of the statements of the licensed victuallers that the magistrates had the absolute control over them, and that there was no appeal from their decision, and every year they could refuse to renew any licences if they thought fit. It will thus be seen that my hon. Friend proposes a Bill which affects some scores of thousands of persons and some millions of property, the measure which he proposes being entirely different, I think, from anything which has ever been proposed or sanctioned by the House with regard to any other description of property or any other interest. Therefore, however sanguine I may be as to what I must call the violent success of his measure, and however desirous I may be to carry out his object, I do not think it likely that the House of Commons will consent to such a proposition as that.

What is meant by the representative system is not that you should have the vote of thousands of persons taken upon a particular question of legislation, but that you should have men selected from those thousands having the confidence of the majority of the thousands, and that they should meet and should discuss questions for legislation, and should decide what measures should be enacted; and therefore in this particular question I should object altogether to disposing of the interest of a great many men, and of a great many families, and of a great amount of property—I should object altogether to allow such a matter to be decided by the vote of two-thirds of the rate-payers of any parish or town. By this Bill they would have the power to shut up at once, or rather at the end of the current year, as far as the sale of these articles is concerned, every hotel, inn, public-house, and beer-shop throughout the country. I say throughout the country, but of course I allude to such subdivisions of the country as the Bill may indicate. There would of course be a difference, for some parishes would shut them up, and some would not; but that is not very much an argument against the Bill. But there might be, and I think there would be, in all probability, sudden, capricious, and unjust action under this Bill, which would have a very unfortunate effect upon the interests of those immediately concerned; and I think it might also create throughout the country violent discussions on the question, and I am afraid might even produce a great and pernicious reaction against the very honest and good objects which my hon. Friend desires to carry out. For that reason, as a Member of this House, representing a very large constituency, and having my sympathies entirely with those who are endeavouring to promote temperance amongst the people, and after much consideration on this subject, I have never yet seen my way at all to give a vote which would tend to pass a measure such as that now proposed to the House.

But then if there be persons who think that the sale of these articles is in itself absolutely evil and immoral—and I did

not understand my hon. Friend to hold that opinion, or to have stated it to the House—but if there be persons of that opinion, they, of course, will not be influenced by any arguments of mine. I do not hold that opinion—and I think the friends of temperance throughout this country make a great mistake when they argue their cause on that ground. There is abundant ground on which to argue this question on which no man can assail or controvert them, and it is unfortunate for a great and good cause that any of its enthusiastic but illogical advocates should select arguments which cannot fairly be sustained.

Now, the question comes, if this Bill were disposed of,—is there nothing which the House could do to meet the growing opinion in many parts of the country that public-houses and beer-shops are often established with pernicious influence upon the district, and in far greater numbers than the fair wants of the people demand? I bring no charge against the magistrates. So far as I have seen, with some few exceptions of which we have heard, they perform their duty, and a disagreeable duty it is, as well as any body of men to whom you could intrust it. With regard to the householders, they are very likely to give recommendations with more regard to the persons themselves than to the wants of the public. Judging from the evidence brought before the committees of this House, it must be admitted that public opinion does not entirely agree with the mode which is at present in existence for the granting of licences, whether they be for public-houses or beer-houses; and looking at the course which the Government has taken—I do not mean this Government in particular, but the course Parliament has taken in past times—I do not see any reason why the public opinion of every city, town, and district should not have something to say with regard to this matter.

Some time ago, when I was down at Birmingham, a large number of persons connected with this question had an interview with me and my hon. Colleague. We had a long discussion on the question, and I explained to them what I now wish to explain to the House—that although objecting to the Bill on the grounds which I have stated, yet it does appear to me that the House might proceed a step further than it has already done, and intrust to the ordinary local governing bodies of the cities, towns, and boroughs throughout the kingdom the decision of this question, with regard to the opening of public-houses and beer-shops, and the granting of licences within the limits of their jurisdiction. You cannot put this power into the hands of the Secretary of State or the Lord Chancellor, as you do the appointment of magistrates; and you cannot remove it from twenty magistrates and put it into the hands of some half-dozen men in the same neighbourhood. You can make no change from where you are, unless you intrust to the municipal council, or some committee of the municipal council, in the various boroughs, the power of determining the number of licences for the sale of wine and spirits or beer.

If you were to intrust it to the Council, instead of to the full vote of the rate-payers, as proposed by the Bill, I think you would avoid everything like a sudden and violent interference with property, and you would also avoid the capricious action which might take place if two-thirds of the rate-payers were to judge this question, and you would give to the whole body of the rate-payers through their representatives in their municipal councils, the determination of a question which every day is becoming more important with the great masses of the people of this country. I know no proposal which could be made from the point where we now stand to the point of the Bill of my hon. Friend except the one which I have suggested. Generally, the municipal councils in this country perform their duties with admirable success, and there is no Bill passed in this century

which has been more successful than the one which the House passed to reform the corporations. If they had this further power, I think it would add to their influence and dignity; and, in all probability, the opinions of the people would be fairly carried out in reference to this question. But there is another question. Hon. Gentlemen opposite may say that this could not be done in the rural districts, where there are no corporations, and therefore my suggestion could not apply. But I think if it were attempted in the towns, and it was found more advantageous and successful than the present system, something could be found before long to extend the new system to the agricultural districts as well: but if that should be found impracticable, it is no reason for debarring the towns from the benefit.

I should not have brought such a question as this before the House, and I am not so sanguine of the result of these changes as what I may call the Temperance party in this House. I have not that faith in any act of the Legislature on this subject which my hon. Friend has. I believe in the effects of the instruction of the people, and of the improvement which is gradually taking place amongst them. I think that drunkenness is not on the increase, but rather is declining; and I hope, whether the law be altered or not, we shall find our working-classes becoming more and more sober than in past times. But as I have on many occasions been before the public favouring the efforts of the advocates of temperance, I have felt bound to state the reasons why I cannot give my vote in favour of this Bill, and to suggest what the House might do by way of giving to the people through their municipal councils control over this question. By doing this you might promote temperance among the people, and at the same time avoid a great and manifest injustice to thousands of persons now engaged in this trade, whose property would be rendered uncertain if not altogether destroyed if the Bill of the hon. Gentleman should receive the sanction of the House.

ECCLESIASTICAL TITLES BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 12, 1851.

From Hansard.

[The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was a measure to prohibit Catholic Bishops from assuming any title from any place or territory within the United Kingdom. A Papal Edict had recently created an Archbishop of Westminster, and this caused a ferment or panic in the country, which was much stimulated by a letter from Lord John Russell, then Prime Minister, to the Bishop of Durham. The Bill passed by large majorities, but it has been wholly ineffectual, is now obsolete, and will probably shortly be repealed.]

I AM exceedingly glad that the discussion has taken the turn which it has now assumed; for as the proposition before the House is that the Speaker should leave the Chair, this appears to me a very fitting time to discuss the principle of the Bill, and the propriety of taking any further steps with regard to it. I was much struck with an observation of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ripon in a former debate, that it is an extremely dangerous thing for a Government to be legislating upon the idea that it is forced to do something with regard to a particular question, without knowing either exactly what it has to do, or how it ought to do it. There is great practical wisdom in that observation.

I will turn back to some of the proceedings connected with this question. The noble Lord at the head of the Government commenced the fray by his celebrated letter; and any stranger to the country who read that letter must have come to the conclusion that some great outrage had been committed. Within a week after the publication of that letter, the noble Lord, the chief officers of the Crown, and some of the principal Judges, including the Lord High Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench, assembled round the festive board of the chief magistrate of the City of London; and there language was used which, to say the least, should not have been employed by sedate and learned men accustomed to administer justice, whether it was used in seriousness or in joke.

I must here remark, however, that I am not at all astonished at anything which takes place in connection with such a question at the Mansion House of the City of London, for, if I am not misinformed, the Mansion House was built out of fines extorted from Nonjurors, from Protestant Dissenters, and, to a large extent, from the society of which I am a member, between the passing of the Act of Uniformity and

the passing of the Act of Toleration. There is another curious fact connected with that building. One hundred and ten years ago, when a proposition was made to build it, the Earl of Burlington of that day presented to the Common Council an admirable design by an Italian architect; but the architect being an Italian, and his name, 'Palladio,' possibly suggesting Rome, his design, which was the best offered, was rejected by the Corporation, though he had been dead 150 years.

I have observed almost all that has appeared in the papers during the agitation of this question, and I have no hesitation in saying that as yet there has been no logical definition of the injury that has been inflicted on this country, and no agreement as to any remedy which Parliament could provide. I may say the same for the leading articles in the newspapers, from the *Times* down to the humblest country paper. Not one has proposed an intelligible remedy for the grievance. Certain specifics, indeed, have been proposed out of doors; but the noble Lord has not been so imprudent as to accept them. The celebrated Dr. Cumming, among the rest, proposed that Cardinal Wiseman should be packed off to Italy in a man-of-war, with Admiral Harcourt as commander. The choice was perhaps happy, because Admiral Harcourt is the son of a man who, while a bishop in the dominant Church, received no less than three quarters of a million of money; and therefore it is no wonder that his son should be hostile to any rival in so profitable a calling.

I will not allude particularly to the speeches made by certain distinguished individuals, to the burnings in effigy or to the threats of serving Cardinal Wiseman as a certain Austrian general has been served. I give the noble Lord credit for being too wise to follow such counsel. But after the noble Lord wrote his celebrated letter, he has had three months for quiet deliberation, whether in Downing-street or Windsor; and at the end of that three months we have the noble Lord's speech, which is not about the Papal rescript, the real matter in hand, but about various matters that have occurred on the other side of the Channel. The noble Lord is now conscious of the difficulty, and cannot withdraw Ireland without overthrowing the whole speech upon which his legislation is founded.

The noble Lord objects to the synod of Thurles. I do not wish to see such synods, or anything else which interferes with education; but if the two Churches are compared, we must be driven to the conclusion that the Protestant bishops and clergy are quite as meddlesome in politics as the Catholics, and more especially upon this very question of national education. I have, while in the south of Ireland, spoken to a gentleman who is a county magistrate and a chairman of a board of guardians, and that gentleman has said that the Established clergy have committed a great mistake in so universally rejecting the national schools, as they have by such conduct thrown them wholly into the hands of the priests. We should not then judge too harshly of the synod of Thurles for taking a different view of education from them, more especially as at that synod the votes were equally divided, which is more than could be said of the Established clergy either in Ireland or in England. But the noble Lord will have no bishops but his own bishops, of whom he is by turns the tyrant and the vassal; while the bishops of Ireland, in whom the people have confidence, are not to have any opinion on this question of education, or, if they have, they are not to express it. But the noble Lord has not been able clearly to define the matter upon which he is going to legislate. He has had to cite a great number of Acts, to garnish with references to history and menaces from other countries, and to make up what lawyers call a cumulative case, in order to establish even the slightest reason for legislation.

The noble Lord admits that the law has not been broken; he cannot cite

any instance in which the Catholic bishops of Ireland have broken the law. I thought that the noble Lord was going to admit that as the law has not been broken, no offence has been committed, instead of which he is about to ask for a stringent law to put down an offence which has never been committed. There is one point on which the law has been broken, and that is in the importation of the Bull; but with that offence the noble Lord will not interfere. The language of the Pope is complained of as offensive; but have priests in power ever used any other? The language is offensive—such language as might have been used by Hildebrand, and very like what is used in our own legal documents. I recollect a charge of libel being brought against an unfortunate newspaper editor, in which he was charged with every imaginable offence; but that was the mere formal wording of the legal document. So it is with the language of the Pope. Offensive, aggressive it is—such as I despise and loathe; it is rather a form than a substance—but it is not a justification for the present attempt at legislation. But the noble Lord says that there is an attack by a foreign Power on the supremacy of the Crown. The hon. Member for Oldham has truly observed that the Pope's being a temporal power is merely an accident. The Pope is a priest, and it happens unfortunately that he is also a temporal prince; but if he were at Avignon, or Naples, or Brazil, or even in the town of Galway, still he would be Pope and priest, and would have precisely the same power over the Catholic world as he has at present.

The supremacy of the Queen is, in the sense used by the noble Lord, no better than a fiction. There might have been such a supremacy down to the times of James II, but now there is no supremacy but that of the three estates of the realm, and the supremacy of the law. The Queen is the chief of the Established Church; but that Church has not been assailed either in its wealth or power. The Queen has not the power of making Roman Catholic bishops, and therefore the making of them by the only Power on earth that has authority to make them, is no invasion of the prerogative of the Crown. The noble Lord says that the Pope has ignored the Established Church of this country, and has abolished the see of Canterbury. But the Pope has always done so; he looks upon the Church of England as an usurping Church, pretty much as the Church of England looks upon congregations of Dissenters. Does not that Church, when appealing to the House on the plea of religious destitution, reckon up the population in a district, and the number of Church sittings, without taking into account the number of dissenting teachers, or of dissenting places of worship? It is thus that one Church always treats another; and it is one of the unfortunate proofs that, so much as we have of Churches and of religions, the true spirit of Christianity has made very little way amongst the Churches of the world. I am not one of those who think there is any strength in the argument which is used so often, that bishops in ordinary are not necessary for the effectual working of the Roman Catholic Church. I am no friend to the bishops of any Church. But my individual opinion has nothing whatever to do with legislation on this question. I am not so presumptuous as to say to another Church that bishops are not necessary for that Church; and if bishops are necessary for the Anglican Church, who can say they are not necessary for the Church of Rome? We have heard much of the changing of vicars-apostolic to bishops in ordinary, and I wish on this subject to read an extract from a letter which I have received from a constituent who is a learned ecclesiastic of the Romish Church. I believe that in that letter it is conclusively urged that the change from vicars-apostolic to bishops in ordinary went far to free the bishops from the arbitrary supremacy of the Pope, and to place them under the control of

a regularly-organised code of laws. My correspondent says that the principal argument against the bishoprics was founded on the assumption that the bishops would be more under the control of the Pope than the vicars-apostolic. That is wholly erroneous. The bishop exercises his authority in virtue of his office, while the vicar-apostolic acts as the mere delegate of the Pope, who is the immediate bishop of the district. In both cases the territory is marked out. In one case it is called a diocese, and in the other a district, and in both cases the Pope confers the jurisdiction. In both cases the jurisdiction extends to all who belong to the Church, which includes, in the estimation of the Church, all baptized persons; but it is not to be exercised except over those who choose to submit to it. In the case of the bishops, they are governed by laws regularly enacted; while the vicars-apostolic are controlled solely by the will of the Pope, who exercises as much power as he thinks proper. The difference is this, a vicar-apostolic is alone responsible to the Pope and to his will, whatever it might determine; but when a bishop in ordinary is appointed, he is relieved from the caprice—if I may say so—of the Pope, and is subject alone to those portions of the canon law that can be exercised in any country in accordance with the permission of the civil law of that country. It is asserted that the Roman Catholics of this country have suffered no grievance in being driven back again to the rule of vicars-apostolic. I beg to ask the people of this country, whether they would prefer to live under the ordinary constitution of the country, administered by its recognised tribunals, or under some special commission, with some exceptional state of the law, where liberty may be less secure than under the ordinary and recognised law of the State? I do not intend quoting further from the document I hold in my hand; but I think it only fairness to the gentleman who sent it that I should make use of it to this extent. I maintain that the course that has been taken in making these bishops in ordinary of vicars-apostolic is calculated to relieve the Roman Catholics in England from much of that ultramontane influence of which the House has heard so much: for if the bishops are natives here, and appointed with the consent of those over whom they will subsequently exercise control, it is reasonable to suppose that the Roman Catholic Church will become more national in character, than when ruled over by the Pope and the statutes of his council.

The noble Lord has designated the proceeding as an insult to the Crown, and an attack on the independence of the nation. I wish he could get rid of the silly and groundless fears he entertains on these points. To talk of this nation, its Crown and independence, being menaced by a petty sovereign or prince at Rome, is really too ludicrous. If England had not concurred in the invasion of Rome by the French, that temporal prince, the Pope, would probably be now no prince, there would be a republic established at Rome, and, perhaps, the religious separated from the political power for ever. But the country is misled by these phrases, which are so misused by the noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown. 'A foreign power has endangered the supremacy of the Crown, and attacked the independence of the country.' The whole matter is one of idea, of sentiment, of such fine material that it is impossible for an Act of Parliament to grapple with the case before us. I admit the insult and offensiveness of the language—it is repulsive to our feelings that such language should be employed. But, admitting all that, I am at a loss to discover how legislation can affect the question beneficially at all. The noble Lord (Lord John Russell) has told us that this Bill will meet the emergency, and no more. I think the noble Lord is wise and prudent in not making it more stringent than it is. Of course the noble Lord consulted the law officers

of the Crown. It is well known that he consulted the bishops; and I doubt not he consulted the noble Earl who fills the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

The noble Lord informs the House that the Bill will meet the emergency, and that he has proposed nothing that is not required for the precise evil complained of; and yet, within a few days after its first appearance, three-fourths of the Bill are given up. After three months of discussion and consultation with all these able and learned and pious men, with whom the noble Lord has been conferring, he admits that he knows nothing of the nature of his own Bill; and upon the occasion of the second reading, consequently withdraws three-fourths of it. I then argued that the noble Lord did not know where he was hit, or the remedy for the wound of which he complained; and the fact of the withdrawal of three-fourths of the measure supports my argument. The noble Lord has retained the clause forbidding the assumption of titles. Well, assuming titles will be illegal by the Bill, what is the result? At present the assumption is not legal, and titles assumed by Roman Catholic ecclesiastics are looked upon as mere matters of courtesy, which give no status, or rank, or precedence over any other subject of the realm. But in any case the Roman Catholics only will submit to the authorities of these dignitaries—no matter whether bishops, cardinals, or archbishops.

But is there no effect produced by the Bill? Already the noble Lord has thrown over the Protestant feeling of the country, the sentiments of the Cummings, the M'Neiles, and the Stowells. It is not a question of Protestantism at present; it is a question of politics. I beg to ask the noble Lord, then, as a question of politics, who is injured by the Bill? The noble Lord does not touch the Pope. I believe the Pope acted very foolishly, and that Cardinal Wiseman also acted foolishly; but both will go unscathed. The true sufferers will be the wearer of the Crown, and the millions of subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion. Look at the speeches, the writings, and the denunciations of the last six months. Is it possible that all these could have occurred in the United Kingdom without producing a permanent evil as regards the harmony and the well-being and strength of the nation? Then take Ireland alone. There has been a great gulf heretofore existing between England and Ireland, a gulf created by past legislation. The noble Lord has helped to widen and deepen that gulf, and there is now a more marked separation between the countries than has existed at any period in the last twenty years. We have by our legislation taught 8,000,000 of our fellow-subjects that their priests are hated by the British Legislature, and that they themselves are treated with disrespect, and their loyalty denied by this House and the leading Minister of the country. That is an evil of great magnitude, and one which we are bound to take into consideration.

We were informed not long since that at the Thurles synod, half the prelates assembled were in favour of the colleges, and the other half against them. I doubt not, if a second synod were to take place, there will be an unanimous feeling against them. The noble Lord heretofore had a party amongst the ecclesiastics of the Church of Rome: but he has destroyed that party by his policy, and rendered them unanimous against the Protestant Government of that country. I ask any Gentleman here, not a Roman Catholic, what would be the effect of the recent proceedings on him if he were a member of that Church? Does the House suppose there is a Roman Catholic family in the empire, when assembled round the hearth, that does not entertain a greater reverence for the Pope now, than before these mischievous proceedings commenced? And does it not stand to reason that the missionary agencies of that Church, scattered over the kingdom

for the conversion of Protestants, will take fresh hope from the paroxysm of terror and alarm into which the Protestants of England have thrown themselves? The apostles overthrew the Pagan worship of Rome; Luther, single-handed, wrested whole empires from the Pope; whilst here is a Church, endowed with millions, and having 15,000 learned clergymen for its guidance and control, thrown into a paroxysm of terror, and all that by a Church which, in these realms, has not the thousandth part of the advantages possessed by its opponents.

I wish the noble Lord had told the House where the gain lies. Is it in the Preamble of the Bill, which refers to the inviolable character of the Established Church in Ireland? Every one is aware that the Established Church in Ireland is not worth one good man raising his voice in its support; and the noble Lord well knows that it only waits the lifting of his own finger to ensure such a majority in that House as would suppress by Act of Parliament that Church for ever, notwithstanding its inviolable character. Is it as a matter of gratification to the ministers of the Established Church that the noble Lord introduced the measure—a matter of strife and rivalry between the Bishop of St. James's-square and the Archbishop of Golden-square? Is one to be suppressed for the satisfaction of the other? In such a case, there will be no great gain to the people, to political freedom, or to the Christianity of this country in suppressing one ecclesiastic, and conferring domination and power on the other.

In my opinion the noble Lord has made a great mistake. In the first place, he wrote a letter to the Bishop of Durham, and then consulted with the Bishop of London. A more unsafe man than the Bishop of London he could not have selected. Look at his character. He is an amphibious creature, reported by one to be a Puseyite, whilst another says he is on the high road to Rome. I am sorry to hear the amount of abuse that is lavished upon him; and yet the noble Lord 'rejoiced that he had the consent of that prelate.' That ecclesiastic, with twenty thousand excellent consolations, shed tears in presence of a deputation that waited on him. But doubtless they resembled the tears shed by the Syrian monk, who declared, according to the historian, that 'tears were as natural to him as perspiration.' However, it would appear that the said monk was less wise than the Bishop of London in one respect, for another historian relates of him that he feigned insanity that he might escape being made a bishop.

It is evident that the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government is in a quagmire, and he knows it well. It would be far better for the interests of the Crown, of the Kingdom, of this House, and of Christianity, if the Bill were withdrawn, instead of being proceeded with. There is no one in favour of the Bill except the noble Lord himself, for not one of his colleagues has really made a good fight for it. The Government supporters disagree; and even the law officers of the Crown give different accounts of the measure. The hon. Member for Midhurst made an excellent speech, not in favour of the Bill, but against Papal aggression; and concluded his speech with a request, that he should be permitted to substitute a new preamble and new clauses, which he was perfectly ready and willing to do. I doubt not when we go into Committee the hon. Gentleman will submit those clauses. But the Bill of the noble Lord is repudiated by all classes; and the press also repudiates it. It is well understood that the noble Lord is practising a cheat, a delusion on the people of England. The people have been clamouring for a resistance to the aggression of the Pope, but not for such resistance as this measure affords. They expect something that will be felt; but not the pretence of a measure, which, whilst it insults Roman Catholics, offers no defence to Protestants.

There is another remarkable point in this matter. I do not find any of the

holy men of this House in favour of the Bill—men who are really attached to the Church of England. The hon. Members for Oxford University, for Kent, for Midhurst, not overlooking the Solicitor-General,—not one of them is to be found struggling in favour of the Bill. It has been said 'Multæ terricolis linguæ, cœlestibus una.' But it does not appear that the celestials in this House are more agreed about the matter than any of those who feel little regard for Protestantism or Catholicism. If the noble Lord cannot show a united Cabinet or party—if out of doors nobody is in favour of the Bill, and the press is almost unanimously against it —it is a fair ground for asking the House to proceed no further with the measure. If legislation be necessary at all, let it be substantial and to the purpose; if we are to obey the clamour out of doors, let us satisfy it by some substantial measure of legislation. It is said that there is a cry out of doors for a dissolution of Parliament, and I rather think some hon. Members are afraid of that. The hon. Member for Salford (Mr. Brotherton) has said that I and my Colleague do not speak the sentiments of our constituents: but, at least, we speak our sincere conviction. A reverend gentleman (the Rev. Hugh Stowell), one of the constituents of the hon. Member for Salford, whose Protestantism seems to be vituperation, and whose Christian charity clamour, has thanked God that he is represented by the hon. Member for Salford. I am sure my hon. Friend must feel it humiliating to be patronised in such a manner.

But I will admit that many Members act in a manner opposed to the sentiments of a large number of their constituents. What of that? If there be any truth in the representative system, the 656 men returned to this House may be considered as of the foremost men of the country. It is not their duty to be the victims, subjects, and tools of a cry, but manfully and boldly to withstand it, if they believe it to be a hollow one. Of course, this language will not apply to hon. Members who conscientiously differ from me on this question; but they must be very blind who do not know that the force of this cry, for which the noble Lord is largely responsible, is one not a few Members are disposed to yield to. We ought to resist the cry, to stem the torrent; and it will be infinitely more honourable to go home to our avocations, if we have any, and abandon public life for ever, in defence of principles we have always held to be true, rather than be instruments of a cry to create discord between the Irish and English nations, and to perpetuate animosities which the last twenty-five years have done much to lessen. We are here to legislate calmly and deliberately, without reference to the passions and contending factions that may rage out of doors; we are in a position to see that the course in which the noble Lord has been so recklessly dragging us is fruitful in discord, hatred, religious animosities—that it has separated Ireland from this country, has withdrawn her national sympathies from us, and has done an amount of mischief which the legislation of the next ten years cannot entirely, if at all, abate.

No one would have touched this Bill —certainly not the noble Lord—could he have foreseen all the difficulties that have arisen out of it. First of all, the Government has been broken up, though probably the noble Lord is patriotic enough to believe that that is not a national calamity. But the business of Parliament has been stopped for half a session; and we are not at the end of it yet; the Speaker has not left the chair; we are only on the brink, and about to plunge in. An hon. Gentleman has a proposition, to be supported by a large number, for a measure infinitely more stringent. The noble Lord will not carry his own measure but by the support of those who want one much more stringent. But they who want persecution will rather take a little than be entirely baffled. The noble Lord will not withdraw the Bill, because it will be humiliating to do so. But is

it not very humiliating to go on with it; to be legislating for no practical good result; to pass a measure which the noble Lord knows will not satisfy those to appease whose clamour it is proposed, and which must produce the worst effects between England and Ireland? In 1829 a measure was passed—long delayed—which professed to give Roman Catholics all the liberty we ourselves enjoy. I will stand upon that Act. It is far better to have faith in the population of this country, to bind them to the Legislature and the Crown by a generous and confiding treatment, than to proceed in such a course as the House is now invited to enter on.

The noble Lord, I repeat, thinks there is great danger in this aggression of the Pope. How is there any danger? The Pope can have no authority, except over the Catholics. It is said there are 8,000,000 in England and Ireland; and should the number in England and Ireland increase to 20,000,000, there will be great danger of the Roman Catholic religion becoming the established religion of the country—should an Established Church exist so long. Therefore, the argument of danger supposes the conversion of the people; for it is only by this means that the country can, to any considerable degree, come under the rule of the Pope. The noble Lord has drawn up an indictment against 8,000,000 of his countrymen: he has increased the power of the Pope over the Roman Catholics, for he has drawn closer the bonds between them and their Church and the head of their Church. The noble Lord has quoted Queen Elizabeth and the great men of the Commonwealth, as though it were necessary now to adopt the principles which prevailed almost universally two hundred years ago. Does the noble Lord forget that we are the true ancients, that we stand on the shoulders of our forefathers, and can see farther? We have seen the working of these principles, and their result, and have concluded to abandon them.

I have not touched on any matter purely religious: this House is not the place for religious questions. But reflecting on the deep mysteries of religion, on my own doubts and frailties, on the shortness of the present time, and on the awful and unknown future—I ask what am I that I should judge another in religious things, and condemn him to exclusion and persecution? I fear not for the country on questions like this. England, with a united population—though the noble Lord has done much to disunite them—cares nothing for foreign potentates, be their combinations what they may. England, with her free press, her advancing civilisation, her daily and hourly progress in the arts, sciences, industry, and morals, will withstand any priestly attempts to subjugate the mind, and successfully resist any menaces, whether coming from Lambeth or from Rome. I am one of a sect which has invariably held the principles I now advocate, which has in past years suffered greatly from those principles which the noble Lord now wishes to introduce into our Legislature. I cannot do otherwise than raise my voice against such an attempt, and ask the noble Lord to proceed no further.

ADMISSION OF JEWS TO PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 15, 1853.

From Hansard.

Although this question has been discussed almost every session since I have had a seat in Parliament, I have never ventured to trouble the House with any observations upon it, and hoping, as I do most unfeignedly, that this may be the very last occasion on which it may be necessary to discuss it, I will ask the attention of the House for a very few moments while I state the opinions which I entertain upon it. I was once asked by an hon. Member on that (the Opposition) side of the House why I had not spoken upon the Jew Bill, and I gave him a candid answer. I told him that I had never heard anything in the shape of a fact or argument from the opponents of this measure, which, like facts and arguments on a great many questions which come before us, could be fairly grappled with, and which a man could undertake to lay hold of in the hope of answering it. I told him, further, that it appeared to me that the opponents of this measure were actuated, I believed very honestly, by what was rather a sentiment than anything else; and the hon. Gentleman to whom I have alluded, not by any means one of the least distinguished amongst you, admitted that I was perfectly right, and that it was more a sentiment than anything else. A sentiment is, of course, difficult to argue against. This sentiment has gradually sunk down into a phrase, and we understand now that what is meant by that phrase is that we, on this side, are about to unchristianise the House of Commons.

Now I have endeavoured, in the course of these discussions, to trace whence this notion or feeling of unchristianising springs, and I think I can trace it backwards through the changes of the law, by which successive parties and sects, and sections of the people of this country, have, during the last 160 years, been admitted to full participation in the rights of citizenship. The very same feeling, though it was called something else, was in operation when you excluded the Roman Catholics from Parliament. The very same feeling under a somewhat different title was in operation when the Unitarians were subjected to oppressive statutes; and it was the very same spirit, however much you may attempt to disguise it, under which, previous to the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, the Dissenters of this country were excluded from municipal and other offices. It always seems to me to come from that appetite for supremacy which springs from the fact that we have had in this country a powerful and dominant

Church, connected chiefly with a powerful ruling class, and that step by step the people of this country, one section after another, have wrested from that Church, and from that class, the rights of citizenship which we have claimed, and which we now enjoy.

Now what can be more marvellous than that any sane man should propose that doctrinal differences in religion should be made the test of citizenship and political rights? Doctrinal differences in religion, in all human probability, will last for many generations to come, and may possibly last so long as man shall inhabit this globe; but if you permit these differences to be the tests of citizenship, what is it but to admit into your system this fatal conclusion, that social and political differences in all nations can never be eradicated, but must be eternal? The hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir R. H. Inglis) may be taken probably for as honest and consistent a representative of the opponents of this Bill as can be found in this House. I should like to ask whether there is any difference between the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford and Baron Rothschild in any matter which can affect citizenship or the duties of citizens, or in anything whatsoever of which the laws of this country can justly take cognizance as relating to the actions of the subjects of the Crown. I have watched the hon. Baronet for many years with great admiration—not with admiration for the principles which he holds, but with admiration for the manner in which he always maintains them. If all men who hold what I regard as sound principles in this House were to take the hon. Baronet for their model, sound principles would march on much faster than they do.

Take, for instance, what may be called the morality of politics, and you will find that the hon. Baronet draws nearly all his opinions from the very same source that Baron Rothschild draws his. We have discussed in this House the question of capital punishment. I find the hon. Baronet, with his accustomed bland dignity, quoting against me with perfect confidence the ninth chapter of the book of Genesis; and I have a strong suspicion that he takes his notions of the priesthood from the times of the book of Exodus. I think I have a distinct recollection that when the question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister was under discussion, the hon. Baronet referred the House with perfect confidence to the book of Leviticus. The hon. Baronet too, I think, will not dispute that his law of tithes comes from the very same book. If it be a question of oaths, although it has been said by the highest authority, 'Ye have heard that it hath been said in old times, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thy vows,' the 'swear not at all' is disregarded, and the practice of the hon. Baronet—a practice approved by his Church, and approved, I presume, by a majority of this House—is precisely that which existed in the time of the Old Testament Scriptures. If the hon. Baronet does not defend the practice of war, yet I know writers who profess the same faith as the hon. Baronet who have defended the practice of war, because they say it was, if not inculcated, at least permitted, in the Old Testament. I cannot see, if the hon. Baronet takes his public morality from these writings, and if Baron Rothschild takes his from the same source, and if the question of citizenship be not a matter of doctrinal religion, but of the due performance of our duties to each other and to the State —I cannot see why the hon. Baronet should, for thirty or forty years, have sat in this House, and Baron Rothschild, elected by the first constituency of the kingdom, be shut out.

It would be as reasonable for a man to quarrel with his own shadow, as for the hon. Baronet to quarrel with Baron Rothschild on these grounds. But what a ridiculous position the House is placed in! You have had not only Baron Rothschild, but another Member of his per-

suasion at that bar, and, assuming he was a Christian, you allowed him to begin to take the oath upon the Old Testament. You made no objection to him until he came to the words 'on the true faith of a Christian.' If the oath had been taken with the words 'on the faith of a Christian,' as you interpret them, on the Old Testament, it could not possibly be a legal oath. If it was necessary for a man who took an oath in a court of law to be a Christian, no Judge would allow an oath to be taken on the Old Testament; but would require it to be taken on the New Testament, because the book must be the symbol of the faith by which he affirmed. Well, you passed a Resolution that the seat for the City of London was full, and you put yourselves out of court with regard to the issuing of a new writ. If a man was an alien, and had been elected by a constituency, I presume that it would be competent for the House to appoint a Committee to examine into the petition charging him with being an alien, and upon the Report of the Committee that he was such, he would be excluded from the House, and a new writ would issue. But here you have no means of appointing a Committee for the purpose of interrogating Baron Rothschild as to whether he is a Jew or a Christian. He took one oath, and part of another. This House declared that the seat was full, and that a new writ for the City of London could not be issued; and then this House excluded the Member who was elected from his seat.

These facts lead me to the consideration of a second question, of as great importance as the original question which we are now discussing. This question has been discussed and decided upon within a very recent period in a great many divisions in this House, not less, I believe, than fourteen times. Whether it was before or after dinner—whatever the circumstances under which we were assembled—there was always a very large majority in favour of this Bill, from twenty-six, at the lowest, to more than one hundred at the highest. I want to ask hon. Gentlemen opposite whether they think, after the House of Commons in two, if not three Parliaments, within very recent years, has decided fourteen times in favour of the candidate elected by the City of London, that it is constitutional, after these incessant and oft-repeated expressions of opinion on the part of the constituencies of this country, that this question should longer remain unsettled?

I am told there is an awful power in another place. I do not mean Lords Temporal so much as Lords Spiritual. I have no great opinion of Bishops in any case. But of all subjects, this is about the very last on which I should like to take the opinion of the Bishops of the Church of England. High titles, vast revenues, great power, conferred upon Christian ministers, are as without warrant to my mind in Scripture as in reason. I do not expect that they should be able to give an unbiassed, impartial judgment on a question like this. I understand that the noble Lord at the head of the Government—coming from the north may possibly account for it—is alarmed at the power of the Bishops. I would not suggest how it is to be overcome; but probably there are means by which the Government can procure the passing of this Bill through the other House of Parliament. Now, that appears to be a question of some importance. Though hon. Gentlemen opposite have insisted on discussing this question, night after night, every session, for years past, let us have the subject thoroughly probed, if this is to be the last night.

The House of Commons has decided in favour of this Bill. Does any hon. Gentleman deny it? If the House of Commons represents the country, the country is in favour of this Bill. There is another estate of this realm, the most dignified of all, represented in this House by the Gentlemen who sit on that (the Ministerial) bench; that estate of the realm unites cordially with the House of Commons and with the people in

this Bill. Fourteen times has this measure been carried by large majorities; repeatedly has it been sent to the other House, and each time has it been rejected, and on some occasions rejected in a manner which seemed to indicate contempt. Now, I ask the noble Lord the Member for the City of London if there is any remedy in the Constitution for this state of things? The noble Lord had the opportunity of admitting the Jews by a Resolution of this House—he had a precedent of the most conclusive kind in the case of Mr. Pease—and although the law officers were not clear upon the law on that occasion, still the House of Commons, having once established a precedent of that nature, any person wishing to sustain the power of this House, and of one great branch of the Legislature, would have done wisely to have maintained the precedent, and to have relied on it in this case.

The noble Lord preferred what he thought a more constitutional course, and he asks this House to pass Bills for the purpose. Year after year this House has passed this measure, and I ask the noble Lord whether he thinks we are to go on year after year bombarding the Lords with this Jew Bill, with no other result than that it should be sent down again? If the British Constitution affords no remedy for this state of things, it is not worth all the boasting which the noble Lord and others have heaped upon it. There are two remedies for this evil. The one is the creation of new Peers. ['Hear!'] Do not for a moment imagine that I should recommend it. I think the remedy might be worse than the disease; but that is one of the remedies, as I understand it, which the Constitution offers to the Crown in cases of this nature, provided the case be of sufficient magnitude. We know that this remedy has been threatened in our day, and threatened with some success.

There is another remedy. Some Gentlemen say, 'How can you expect the House of Lords to pass this Bill, when there is no ferment in the country?' I thought noblemen in that assembly were in an atmosphere so serene, that though disturbed occasionally by the contentions of prelates and the disputations of rival lawyers, they might be judged to be in that one place on the earth 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' But we are told there is no ferment in the country. I have seen ferments in this country, and many others have. I do not much admire them. I would rather see the Houses of Legislature, whether the one or the other, taking these questions up in a broad, philosophic, generous spirit, and discussing and settling them in that spirit, than that they should wait until there is a ferment in the country approaching to confusion, and then surrender, upon terms that shall be humiliating to them, prejudices which, if given up in time, might have been forgotten in the gratitude and the applause of their countrymen. It is assumed, and properly and wisely, that you will get no ferment up about the Jew Bill. I have no objection to admit that the Jews, not being great in numbers, and not free from some disadvantage, consequent upon that prejudice so prevalent on the benches opposite, will give occasion to no ferment before which those benches will quail. ['Oh, oh!'] They will quail soon enough when there is a ferment. ['Oh, oh!'] If that is doubted, I refer you to the history of the last twenty-five years in proof of what I say. But I want no ferment. I want argument and sound principles of legislation to prevail within the Houses of Parliament, and not the fear of anything that may take place outside.

But now comes the case of the noble Lord who leads the Government in this House. The noble Lord has worked at this Bill for many years; he has induced this House to abdicate the power which it possessed, by precedent, of admitting the Jews to this House by a Resolution of this House. He has re-

any bold and determined attempt to interfere with the education of the common people of England and Wales.

The right hon. Gentleman appeared to me to prove too much. He tried to prove that it was the duty of the Government to educate the people; but if it be the duty of Government to educate them, it must be the duty of the Government to enforce education. I do not know where the line can be drawn. If it be its solemn duty to afford opportunity for education, and to see that all the people are educated, it appears to me we must come inevitably to the conclusion, that Government has the power, and that it is also its right and its duty, to enforce education on all the people subject to its rule.

The noble Lord at the head of the Government objected to the Dissenters that they had supported the Committee of Privy Council in 1839, whilst they oppose it in 1847; that they were then in favour of this interference, and are now against it. I admit that many, or at least, that some of the Dissenters were in favour of it eight years ago. But we have had some experience from 1839 to 1847. At that time the Dissenters regarded the institution of the Committee of Privy Council as a step leading away from that power which the Church of England wished to usurp, of educating the whole people; and the Dissenters hoped we were on the road at last to overcome the pretensions which the Church of England had so long asserted, that she was called upon and bound to undertake the business of education, and that she ought to be entrusted with the education of the people. But from 1839 to this year we have found no step taken by the Government which has not had a tendency to aggrandize the Established Church. In 1839 the noble Lord proposed a scheme which, from the opposition of the Established Church and the Wesleyans, was withdrawn. In 1843, the right hon. Baronet the late Secretary for the Home Department (Sir James Graham) proposed a scheme of education in connection with the Factories Bill—a scheme which was thought by everybody to give undue power to the Established Church, and which, in consequence of the opposition of the Dissenters, was withdrawn. In 1847, the noble Lord comes forward with another scheme. It has the same defect; its object, tendency, and result will be to give increased and enormous power to the clergy of the Established Church. It is a scheme of which the Dissenters cannot avail themselves, in accordance with the principles by which they are Dissenters; and, therefore, they are bound now to step forward and protest against this as against the former schemes. And I wonder not they have come to the conclusion that it is dangerous to them as members of Dissenting bodies, and dangerous also to the civil liberty of the people, that the State should interfere with education, since the Government, it appears, is not able to interfere without giving increased power to the clergy of an already dominant Church.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh, and the noble Lord who has just sat down, have both failed to convey to the House any intimation that there is much doing in the cause of education by voluntary effort throughout the kingdom. If a man came to this House from any other country, and knew nothing of what was going on in England, he would have come to the conclusion that voluntary efforts had not only not succeeded, but had never even been attempted—so little would appear to have been done from the statements they made to the House. If these efforts have succeeded, few Members will say that any interference by the Government is desirable. If there be one principle more certain than another, I suppose it is this, that what a people is able to do for itself, that the Government should not attempt to do for it. For nothing tends so much to strengthen a people—to make them great and good—as the constant exercise of all their faculties for public objects, and the carrying on of all public works

and objects by voluntary contributions among themselves.

I will just ask the attention of the House for a moment to what has been done during the last few years. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh said, we had been trying the voluntary principle ever since the Heptarchy; that the voluntary principle had been, in fact, for generations and ages on its trial; and the result was, that we had an enormous amount of intellectual destitution in the country. But it is not a fair statement to say, that we have been trying the voluntary system since the Heptarchy. We have not been trying the voluntary system to make railroads since the Heptarchy, but since the year 1830; and it would be as fair a statement to say that the voluntary system would never make railroads for this country, because it had not made railroads in fifteen or sixteen years, as to say that the voluntary system will not educate the people because it has not provided full means of education since 1790; many archbishops, bishops, and other distinguished members of the Established Church having opposed themselves to the effective education of the common people.

The House is not very fond, and I admire its judgment in this respect, of hearing statistics on a question of this kind; but it is a matter of figures as to what has been done. Looking to the statistics given by the friends and opponents of this measure, by Dr. Hook and Mr. Baines, and others who have made calculations on the subject, it appears that from the year 1818 to this time the progress has been something extraordinary. In 1818 there were 674,000 day-scholars in England and Wales; in 1833, there were 1,276,000; in 1847, there were 2,147,000. Thus, in 1818, the proportion was 1 in 17 to the population; in 1833, it was 1 in 11; in 1847, it was 1 in 8. The population has increased only 49 per cent. since that time, whilst the scholars in our day-schools have increased at least 210 per cent.; that is, leaving out of view the numbers who are Sunday scholars. I agree with the noble Lord who spoke last, that Sunday-school education is not all the children should have: but when you are complaining of the want, the destitution of education, it is fair that should be taken into account. In 1818, the Sunday scholars numbered 477,000; in 1833, they were more than 1,000,000; and from that time to this there has been a very rapid increase.

Now, look at Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary at War, I think, is not in his place, or he could tell us something about the Church with which he is so honourably connected, I mean the Free Church of Scotland. If within three or four years they have raised more than 1,000,000*l.* sterling, if they have built or offered to build schools in some 600 or 700 parishes, what will the right hon. Member for Edinburgh say to this? I have been in their churches and chapels; and if there be one thing more honourable to the Scotchmen of this generation than another, it is the magnanimous and wonderful efforts which the members of that communion have made to constitute themselves a Church free from the trammels and embarrassments attendant on a connection with the State.

We will take Wales, and see what has been done there. In the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald* of the 21st of March, 1846, I find it stated, that

'About seven or eight years ago, in the seventy-three parishes of Anglesea, in which there were churches, there was not one Sunday-school connected with the Established Church, whilst there were in the county no fewer than 156 Sunday-schools kept by the various denominations of Dissenters.'

And the statement went on—

'There are now in the six counties of North Wales alone 1,022 places of public worship, in which Sunday-schools are regularly kept by Dissenters, and well attended, viz.—

Calvinistic Methodists .	479	schools.
Independents	260	,,
Baptists	81	,,
Wesleyans	202	,,

which were attended by upwards of 140,000 children altogether.'

With respect to Wales, there is this remarkable fact, that the education of the common people—of the labouring classes—has been altogether the work of the Dissenting communities in that part of the kingdom. There is not a Member of this House from Wales, on whatever side of the House he sits, who will deny that *something like nine out of ten* of the labouring classes in Wales who have received education within the last *fifty years, have received that education* at the hands of the Dissenting bodies. There is, I believe, a Commission of educational inquiry now at work in Wales. We have not their report yet; but I venture to foretell that when that report is printed it will establish the fact I have stated—that of late years, where the Church has educated one child in this part of the country, the Dissenting Churches have educated from eight to ten.

The noble Lord at the head of the Government appears to differ from his right hon. Colleague the Member for Edinburgh. From what he states, I understand he is of opinion that the voluntary principle has done a good deal—namely, it has provided schools sufficient for the wants of the population. The noble Lord said, speaking of his coming back to office—

'When, however, we came, being newly-appointed members of the Committee, to consider the state of education, it appeared to us that a very great number of schools had been built, and that there was no longer such a demand as there had been for money to build schools; and that as various deficiencies in the management and conduct of the schools had been observed, it would be advisable to make Minutes, proposing a different distribution of the sum which might be voted by Parliament, and laying down in those Minutes what the application of that sur should be.'

So that we have the authority of th *noble Lord for this fact, that the syster* hitherto pursued, the voluntary systen has provided schools in about sufficien abundance; and it is because the Gc vernment actually did not find that the had the means of distributing thei grants for the building of schools, tha they now come before the House an ask for powers to be allowed to spen the grants in improving the quality c the education. Is it likely, I ask, tha the system which has built their school for many of the population of this coun try, will be very long in improving th *quality of the education given in them* is it likely that we shall have to wai long before it will be no more neces sary to pay and pension the school masters out of the public funds, than i is now to build schools for the accom modation of the children taught?

The noble Lord says—

'I do not understand, then, why an Dissenter should refuse to partake of thi grant on the ground that part of thi money is given to Church of England schools, these Church schools being sup ported by the subscriptions of individual who are members of that Church.'

I think it was not very ingenuous of th noble Lord to make such a statement a this in his speech. He must know it i not because the Church of England re ceives money from this grant that Non conformists object to the grant; but i is because Nonconformists themselves in accordance with the principles b which they are so, cannot receive publi money for the teaching of religion i their schools; and, therefore, they ob ject to the State giving money as a advantage to the Church schools—a advantage by which they must profit and which will certainly be most damag ing to the Dissenting schools.

The right hon. Member for Edin burgh does not generally speak wit great courtesy of Dissenters and Non

conformists. I have heard him speak in this House, I think, of the braying of Exeter Hall; and last night he spoke frequently of the clamour made out of doors. It is a very old story for Gentlemen in office—and there must be many comforts, conveniences, and pleasures, no doubt, connected with office, or men would not seek it so much—it is a common thing for men in office to say that any opposition to their plans made out of doors is clamour. But I ask whether it is likely that five hundred men, from all parts of the country, would come up to London, and take the trouble they have done, meeting all the hostility and obloquy heaped upon them, if they did not believe that there was something important in the Minutes to the interests of the different religious communities with which they are connected? And I think that the right hon. Gentleman is one of the last men in this House who should treat this movement as clamour, and condemn it as if it came from an unreasonable class of persons.

The right hon. Gentleman tells us that they are abandoning all the principles which the Nonconformists of past times ever taught; he tells us what republican statesmen and leaders in the United States have said, what has been done or held by Washington, Jefferson, and the commonwealth of Massachusetts. But is there any comparison between the United States and the United Kingdom? Is there any Established Church in the United States? Has the commonwealth of Massachusetts, in every one of its parishes, a gentleman highly educated, well paid, connected by birth or standing with the aristocratic and privileged class, not influenced by the popular sentiment and the popular mind, but acting always in unison and conformity with the privileged class to which he is attached? Give us, if you please, the state of things which exists in the United States, and particularly in that State of Massachusetts. Free us from the trammels of your Church—set religion apart from the interference of the State—if you will make public provision for education, let it not depend upon the doctrines of a particular creed—and then you will find the various sects in this country will be as harmonious on the question of education as are the people of the United States of America.

Just recollect, when the whole of the Nonconformists are charged with clamour, what they mean by being Nonconformists. They object, as I understand, at least I object, to the principle by which the Government seizes public funds in order to give salaries and support to the teachers of all sects of religion, or of one sect of religion, for I think the one plan nearly as unjust as the other. Either the Nonconformists hold this opinion, or they are a great imposture. They object to any portion of the public money going to teachers of religion belonging either to the Established Church or to Dissenting bodies; they object to the receiving it for themselves. They find certain Minutes infringing on this principle. You wish to establish a system by which the young persons of this country shall be trained to certain religious tenets. In your Church schools, we are to have the Catechism taught, and the Liturgy taught, as well as the Scriptures read. All this is to be done under the cognizance and supervision of the clergyman of the parish. The children are to be examined by the clergymen and by inspectors appointed by the Government, who are also to be clergymen of the Church of England. The Minutes do not say so; but under the compact entered into by the Government with the Church, they can appoint no inspector who is not palatable to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The inspector must be discharged if the Archbishop expresses an opinion unfavourable to him. Of course this is in Church of England schools only.

I admit that the noble Lord will not carry it the length of proposing this for Dissenting schools; he will not venture to do so. We are not yet sufficiently humiliated for that. No Government

in this country durst attempt to carry that into effect. But if you had the power to carry out the spirit expressed in the Minutes, I say the Dissenting schools would not be free from interference by the clergymen of the State Church. I am prepared to contend that the powers given by these Minutes to the clergymen examiners are calculated to give a great increase of power to all the clergymen of the Established Church. They are made public officers with respect to schools. Now, the vicar of the parish enters the schools, and inquires about the children; but he has no more power than any other gentleman who may choose to visit it and do the same. But by your Minutes you empower him to enter under the authority of an inspector, who, by your compact with the Church, can only be a clergyman of the Established Church. I say these clergymen and inspectors are prone to meddle with everything. They will go there and examine the children in their books; they will interrogate the teachers as to their methods and their learning. Do you think, if they find a child whose brother or sister goes to a Dissenting chapel, the clergyman will not be zealous enough to use his influence to induce him to attend the church?

It is notorious that, in all parts of England, charities, never intended to be used for the promotion of particular religious opinions, but which are in the hands of the Established Church, are distributed with a view to the effect they may have in bringing an increase of attendance to the National schools or the churches of the Establishment. I know numbers of these cases myself; and I know that a child who did not bow down to the Church, or who refused to go to a National school, would find himself placed under the ban of the clergyman. All the inducements to him, which you boast of, to rise in the world and gain an honourable station in society, would be merely as the idle wind that blows, and would be of no avail whatever to obtain for him an honourable place in life. If anything were wanted to show the effect of these Minutes, look at the triumph your propositions have excited among the members of the Established Church, and the clergy especially. Was there ever a good measure for Nonconformists proposed that was received with an exulting shout of gratulation by the hon. Baronet below me (Sir R. H. Inglis), by the Bishops, and by all the clergy of the kingdom? I am wrong, perhaps, as regards the hon. Baronet; he did not loudly exult, but he took the measure meekly, he took it very thankfully.

I acknowledge that the Church is thankful for everything it can get, and it never loses anything for want of asking for it. I confess I am astonished that Churchmen throughout the country—I do not speak of the clergy, but the laity—have supported this measure, because I think they are as much interested as the Dissenters in opposing any extension of power on the part of the clergy. Nothing tends more to impede the progress of liberty, nothing is more fatal to independence of spirit in the public, than to add to the powers of the priesthood in matters of education. If you give them such increased powers by legislative enactment, you do more than you could effect by any other means to enslave and degrade a people subject to their influence.

There is yet another point to which I must advert. In the speech of the right hon. Member for Edinburgh, who dwelt with great emphasis on the impartiality which he attributed to this proposed system, the right hon. Gentleman said:—

'I do wish that, instead of using phrases of disparagement against the scheme proposed, hon. Gentlemen would just answer me this plain question:—Supposing in any one city there should be a school connected with the Church, another connected with the Wesleyans, and another with the Presbyterians—will any Gentleman distinctly point out to me what share of the public money or what patronage is that which the school connected with the

Church will get, and which the other schools will not get?'

That is the question to which the right hon. Gentleman asked for an answer. If the right hon. Gentleman had looked over the grants that have already been made, he would have found that out of the sum of 149,000*l.*, which during the last three years has been distributed by the Committee of the Privy Council, the Church has received 141,000*l.* There never was anything so impartial. ['Hear, hear!'] No doubt hon. Gentlemen opposite, who cheer, will say that the Dissenters might have had it if they had asked for it. True, but the Dissenters were of a different temper from that. They did not separate from the Established Church that they should afterwards come whining and asking the Government to support their educational system. Their very principle is that the Government has no right to appropriate public funds for the purpose of religious instruction. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh knows right well that in times past they have refused the public money for such a purpose, and that in times to come they are likely to come still less forward than hitherto to avail themselves of such support.

The right hon. Gentleman took us to the United States last night, and I will ask him to accompany me there now for a moment. The impartiality of your plan is like this. Suppose at the present time in the United States—there being no Established Church there—the Government were to offer an endowment to the religious sects, and nine-tenths having refused to accept it, the Government were to persist in endowing the remaining one-tenth, while the others protested against the principle of endowment altogether; in that condition of things the plea of impartiality would be as just and fair as that put forward in the present case by the right hon. Gentleman. The Dissenters have not taken, and they will not take, this money; and it must be clear to those who know the history and understand anything of the principles of Nonconformity, that any Nonconformist who takes one sixpence of this grant for the purpose of teaching the tenets of his particular sect, can never afterwards, with any show of consistency and good faith, say one syllable against the domination and usurpation of the Established Church.

I think that in this year 1847 the time may be said to have come, when, although the members of the Established Church may not consider such scruples wise and prudent, the scruples which do exist and are conscientiously entertained by thousands and millions of our countrymen should be respected, and when the Government should pause before it holds out a great temptation to men to abandon their principles; and, in the event of their refusing to abandon them, offers an enormous advantage to the members of the Established Church. With respect to the Roman Catholics, the right hon. Gentleman did not give a direct reply to the statement of the hon. Member for Finsbury on that part of the subject, when he read an extract from a speech of the noble Lord in 1839; and, as there has been some talk of the negotiations which have been going on with the Wesleyans during the last fortnight, I should be glad, if the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department should think it worth while to notice anything I say, to receive an answer to this question—Have the Privy Council communicated with the authorities and dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church with respect to the appointment of inspectors of Roman Catholic schools, or have they not? If they have, then it follows of course that they must have had the intention, when these Minutes were laid upon the tables of both Houses of Parliament, to make grants to Roman Catholic schools. That would be something noble, something great, something to be admired, in coming forward to offer this great boon to all classes of the people without favour or distinction.

In this House I have often heard men taunt the Dissenters with bigotry in their conduct towards the Roman Catholic population; but let it be said that those Dissenters have ever accorded and been willing to accord to their Roman Catholic brethren all and everything they sought and could conscientiously accept for themselves. Civil rights and privileges the Dissenters have been willing to grant to Catholics. Many of them who have had seats in this House since 1829 would never have found admittance here had it not been for the assistance they received in their struggle for civil liberty at the hands of the Dissenting body. My honest opinion is this, that when these Minutes were laid upon the table, the Government intended, and most wisely, to open these grants to all persons of all religious persuasions whatsoever.

The Government had no idea that there would be a disturbance about these Minutes. They were drawn up by a very clever secretary, who, like other secretaries, is disposed to magnify the importance of his office, and when drawn up they were, no doubt, submitted to the oversight of the bishops in the other House. The whole thing was comfortably concocted, and it was supposed the Dissenters would take it without asking any questions. But the moment the Wesleyans evinced a disposition to join other Dissenters in resisting the measure, it was feared that the opposition might grow too formidable, and negotiations were entered into. Possibly the Government did not make the first overture in this negotiation; but it often happens in these cases, as everybody knows, that there is some convenient friend to make the primary advance, and put the negotiation in train. At this time the Wesleyans are supposed to be under the delusion that the Roman Catholics are to be excluded; and if they are, I am reminded of what has been said by a well-known writer, that it is sometimes as pleasant to be cheated as to cheat.

I am not now going to detain the House with any observations as to the construction of the Committee of the Privy Council, nor will I enter into particulars of the expenditure to be incurred, or of the bribes to be offered. This only I will remark, that I believe the last thing any reasonable man would do to elevate his fellow-man, is to make him a pensioner or recipient of the bounty of the Government. But the question is, whether the Nonconformists, forming so large a part of the population of this country, are to have their feelings and principles disregarded in the course of legislation you adopt—whether a new system of education is to be introduced by which you teach everybody's religion at everybody's expense? The Nonconformists deny your right to do this: they will not receive your money. You offer them that which is of no value to them; and the Church, less scrupulous, receives the gift. The consequence is that the schools of the Dissenters will stand at a great disadvantage as compared with the Church schools—the one class depending solely upon voluntary contributions, the other having certain bribes attached to it of provision for life, and for the maintenance of which the House is asked to vote at the expense of all.

I will say nothing now of the wonderful statesmanship which has chosen this particular season to open an arena of strife, and throw down an apple of discord amongst us when there was an appearance of concord and unanimity. I am sorry it has come to this; I am sorry, not because of the particular effect it may have upon this Government or that Government, but because I must ever regret to see discord and bitterness introduced upon religious subjects, and because I know that when once this strife begins, real interests, useful matters, are neglected; and men separate and stray aside from paths which they might tread together to the advantage of their common country.

I will now conclude; and if I have been betrayed into some warmth of expression, let it be remembered that I am

a member of the Nonconformist body. My forefathers languished in prison by the acts of that Church which you now ask me to aggrandise. Within two years places of worship of the sect to which I belong have been despoiled of their furniture to pay the salary of a minister of the Established Church; and when I look back and see how that Church has been uniformly hostile to the progress of public liberty, it is impossible for me to withhold my protest against the outrage committed by the Government on the Nonconformist body for the sake of increasing the power of a political institution, which I believe is destined to fall before the growing Christianity and the extending freedom of the people.

CHURCH RATES ABOLITION BILL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 27, 1860.

From Hansard.

I FEEL somewhat indebted to the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Whiteside) for having come forward as a new advocate upon this question, for he has thrown, by that physical force oratory of which he is so great a master, some new light upon a question which has been worn almost threadbare. But I do not think that when his speech is read to-morrow it will persuade that great portion of the people who object to Church-rates that the system now existing should be permanently continued. I was not present at the opening of the learned Gentleman's speech, but when I entered the House he was telling us that the Nonconformists of the olden time were a much better class of men than the Dissenters of the present day; that they made no objections to the equity of Church-rates. That was a sentiment which was received with great enthusiasm by hon. Gentlemen opposite, who for the first time have appeared as decided admirers of the Nonconformists of the past. In answer to that it may be said that from the time of Queen Elizabeth down to the Act of Toleration the principles of religious freedom were little understood in this country. We know that not the Church only when it had the power, but many of the Nonconformists themselves, admitted that it was right not only to raise taxes for the support of a particular Church—their own Church—but that it was positively right to coerce those persons who held religious opinions differing from their own. They had not advanced as far as the great body of the English people, including hon. Gentlemen opposite, and the party they represent, have now advanced, and therefore the learned Gentleman's argument goes for very little. But he has treated the House to a public reading of a large portion of the evidence of, I think, two gentlemen who were witnesses before the Committee of the House of Lords. I shall refer only to the evidence of one of these gentlemen—Mr. Bunting. I suspect that when the name of Bunting was mentioned there was a general impression that this was the evidence of a very distinguished man who, although not nominally, yet actually, was Bishop or Archbishop, and almost Pope, in the sect of which he was so distinguished a Member. But that is not the case. The learned Gentleman, not for the first time in his life as a counsel learned in the law, has been beholden for his brief to an attorney practising in Manchester. Mr. Bunting is not a minister of the Methodist Church, as I understand, but is in the profession of the law, and therefore I must strip him of any authority he has upon this matter in connection with the Methodist Church in consequence

of his bearing the name of Bunting. I must say, further, that this Gentleman, although in some sort a Nonconformist, inasmuch as I presume he attends a Methodist Chapel, is a politician of a peculiar kind, such as is not found very frequently among the Dissenting body. I dare say he agrees with the most obstructive, if I may use the term, Conservative or Tory among hon. Gentlemen opposite, and if we had taken his opinion upon all those questions of policy which this House has decided in favour of popular rights and justice to the people of this country during the last twenty years, I have not the least doubt that Mr. Bunting would have been as conclusive in his evidence against all those concessions as he appears to have been upon the question of Church-rates. But the learned Gentleman did not treat the House quite fairly in stating the evidence of this Gentleman, because even he did not feel himself courageous enough to say that the Wesleyan body was in favour of Church-rates. I find he says, in answer to a question whether there was any likelihood of petitions being sent by them:—

'No: from a fear on the part of those who sympathize with the Church of England of eliciting an opinion to the contrary. There is among us a general agreement not to disturb questions which we do not consider essential. The opposition would, I believe, be from a minority in our own body.'

'A distinct minority?—I think I should call it so.'

The House will see from this, that although Mr. Bunting is not remarkable for great hesitation generally in his opinions upon this matter, yet he does hesitate to say that the Wesleyan body was with any sort of unanimity in favour of Church-rates. And I can give my testimony, living as I do in a neighbourhood where they are very numerous, and where their services have been very great, to the fact that when the question of Church-rates is mooted and contests take place, although a few leading men are anxious to keep the question quiet, because it is one which might disturb their body, as far as my observation goes, a very large number—I think a majority—who attend their chapels have generally acted with the party by which Church-rates were opposed.

But it must be borne in mind that the Wesleyan body is of a peculiar character, that its government is more strictly priestly than anything that exists in the Church of England, and almost beyond anything outside the Church of Rome. The Conference, composed of one hundred ministers, dominates to a large extent not only over the private opinions and individual action of the members, but also over what I may call the corporate or sect action, and throughout their numerous chapels in this country, unless the Conference were to give the order or its permission, we should probably not find from any of these congregations petitions presented to this House. But from this fact may be traced an important series of circumstances—that there have been from that body numerous secessions of very noteworthy character, secessions which have not arisen from any difference as to the doctrine, but simply as to the absolute government of the Conference. Notwithstanding all this, as I have said, great numbers of them—I believe a very great majority—vote in opposition to Church-rates whenever a contest takes place, and do unite in sympathy upon this question with the great body of Dissenters belonging to other sects.

I should not have said so much about this particular body had it not been for the extraordinary importance which the learned Gentleman has given to this part of the subject. I find, however, that even from the Conference Methodists there have been 135 petitions presented, from the Methodist New Connection 97, from the Methodist Free Church 164, from the Primitive Methodists 265, from the Calvinistic Methodists 108, from the United Methodists, the Methodist Reformers, and the Wesleyan Association 47; making a total of more

plan of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. The right hon. Baronet the Home Secretary, and the right hon. Baronet the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, also tried plans. Indeed, there are in the House many who have aspired to legislate upon this subject, but have failed in these attempts at conciliation; and I think we must all feel conscious that we must either remain as we are, or adopt the Bill which is now before us. I confess that I am altogether against any kind of dodge by which this matter may be even temporarily settled. I think that if this Church be a national establishment, you cannot by law insist that its support shall be drawn from only a portion of the population. I agree with you altogether in that. If I were a Churchman I would never consent to it, and, not being a Churchman, I wholly repudiate it. The dissensions to which I have referred have prevailed, prevail still, and cannot terminate as long as this impost exists. What is its natural and inevitable result? It must be to create and stimulate the pride of supremacy in the dominant Church, and at the same time produce what I shall call the irritation of subjugation and injustice on the part of that great portion of the people who support their own ministers and places of worship, and who think that they ought not to be called upon to support those of any other sect or Church. Now, is it necessary that this should continue? I often have occasion in this House to give hope to hon. Gentlemen opposite. They are probably the most despairing political party that any country ever had within its borders. They despair of almost everything. They despaired of agriculture. Agriculture triumphs. They despair of their Church, yet whenever that Church has been left to its own resources and to the zeal of its members its triumph has been manifest to the country and to the world. Are you made of different material from the five millions of people who go to the Dissenting chapels of England and Wales? You have your churches,—I speak of the old ones, not of those recently erected by means of voluntary contributions,—you have your churches, which you call national, and you have them for nothing. You have your ministers paid out of property anciently bequeathed or intrusted to the State for their use. In that respect you stand in a far better position for undertaking what, if Church-rates are abolished, you must undertake, than do the great body of your Dissenting brethren. Have you less zeal, have you less liberality, than they have? Do not you continually boast in this House that you are the owners of the great bulk of the landed property of the country? Are you not the depositaries of political power, and do you not tell us that when a Dissenter becomes rich he always walks away from the chapel into your church? If this be so, am I appealing in vain to you, or reasoning in vain with you, when I try to encourage you to believe that if there were no Church-rates the members of your church and your congregations would be greatly improved, and that, as has taken place in the parish in which I live, your churches would be better supported by your own voluntary and liberal contributions, than they can ever be by the penny per pound issuing from the pockets of men who do not attend your church, and who are rendered ten times more hostile to it by the very effort to make them contribute to its support.

I believe that Church-rates must before long be abolished. Hence, I wish to afford some hope and consolation, if I can, to hon. Gentlemen opposite. Mr. Osborne and Mr. Bunting, from whom the right hon. and learned Member so largely quoted, themselves belong to a body that has done marvels in this country in erecting chapels, paying ministers, establishing schools, raising the dead, if you like—for men who were dead to religion have been made Christians; and they have preached the Gospel to the poor in every county, I might almost say in every parish, in

the kingdom. Yet they have not come to Parliament for grants of money; and, although they have often come to me and others for contributions to their chapels and schools, they have never had any force of law to enable them to raise their funds. Throughout England and Wales what would be the condition of your population, your religious establishments, your education, if it were not for the liberality of those sects of whom the right hon. and learned Gentleman thinks fit to speak in disparaging terms?

But I pass to his own country, and though I should like to see Irish Members more frequently taking part in the discussion of questions affecting England and Wales than they do, I was surprised to find that the right hon. and learned Gentleman made no reference whatever to what has taken place in the island from which he himself comes. In the year 1833 you abolished the vestry cess, the Church-rate of Ireland: you abolished one-fourth of the tithe—that is, you took it from the Church and gave it to the landlord; you did many things which the Irish Church at that time, which many Gentlemen of the same party as the right hon. and learned Member denounced, just as you denounce the present Bill. Of course it will be said that the Earl of Derby has since then changed his opinions, and therefore the views he held at that period will have no authority with his followers now. But what has been the effect on that Church? Is there a man in this House with the slightest knowledge of what has occurred in Ireland during the last thirty years, who will not admit that the Irish Protestant Establishment would have been absolutely uprooted and separated from the State for ever long before now but for the large measure of change—I will say of reform—to which the Earl of Derby, as a Minister of that day, was a party? If that be true, what right has anybody to charge the hon. Member for Tavistock with a deadly hostility to the Church of England? I do not believe there is a man in this country at this moment who has any hostility to the Church of England as a Church. I never met with such a man. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has referred to a friend of mine who not long ago had a seat in this House, although he did not mention him by name. I allude to Mr. Miall. There is no man in England whose character for religion, morality, intelligence, or a persistent devotion to what he believes to be right stands higher than that of Mr. Miall. But Mr. Miall has not the smallest objection to the Church of England as a religious body, any more than he has to the Methodist Conference or any other denomination which teaches its own peculiar views of Christianity. What he objects to is that the Church should be, as it has been, so much of a political institution. And there can be no doubt but that among the clergy of the Establishment and the most thoughtful of her sons there is throughout the kingdom at this moment a deep sentiment at work which, altogether apart from Mr. Miall and the Liberation Society, is destined before many years are over to make great changes in the constitution and condition of that Church. And I undertake to say that, if their views, or those of Mr. Miall, were carried out by Parliament, the Church would still be a Church at least as great, as powerful, and as respected as it ever was at any period of its history. I believe it would, as effectually as it ever has done, raise to life those who are religiously dead, and at the same time, more extensively than it does now, preach the Gospel to the poor.

But the right hon. and learned Gentleman might have given us another lesson from Ireland. There the great body of the people—not the possessors of wealth—are in connection with the Roman Catholic Church. Many of us have been in Ireland. I have myself spent several weeks there, travelling from one part of the country to another. I saw chapels everywhere—that great cathedrals had been built, that there

were evidences of great zeal and wonderful liberality among a people at that time poor and dejected, and in a lower physical condition, I undertake to say, than could have been found in any other population in any Christian country of Europe. The Irish Catholics, without any assistance from the State except a paltry grant, which I believe many of them would gladly forego, have provided for all the religious wants of their people. And I venture to assert that religion—not now speaking of particular doctrines or forms—has there permeated even to the lowest class of society in a manner that is not equalled in this part of the kingdom, where your Church Establishment has for ages reigned almost supreme.

But if you are not satisfied with the case of Ireland, let us go to Wales. There you have a poor population who are mainly Dissenters. The Welsh Dissenters do not own the great estates. They have no ancient endowments, no grants from Parliament. They do not even send representatives to this House —['Oh!']—representatives I mean of their peculiar views. Eight-tenths of the people of Wales have no connection with the Established Church. Yet, poor as they are, compared with the population of England, there is not a nook or corner of the Principality in which there are not a chapel, a school, and a minister, or in which you do not constantly see the influence of religious teaching on the character and habits of the people.

But go a little farther north, to a land where men are not supposed to misunderstand their own interests. I refer to the country on the other side of the Tweed. You have an Established Church there. Many years ago you had two considerable secessions from its pale which became powerful sects. They have since united themselves, and their power has proportionately increased. But lately, within the recollection of every Member of this House, for it is but seventeen years ago, there was another great secession; and from what men fancied was the ruin of the Established Church of Scotland there arose a new Church, offering, I will say, to the world, an example of zeal and munificence such as has not been witnessed in this country during the lifetime of the present generation. Not long ago, while in Scotland—a country to which I am very glad to flee when we are liberated from attendance in this House—I took the pains to make some inquiry upon this question; and I found that the Free Church, which comprises probably not more than one-third of that portion of the population who pay any attention to religious matters, raised voluntarily, during the year when I made the inquiry, a larger sum than the whole annual emoluments of the Established Church of Scotland. It has built, I think, something like seven hundred churches throughout that part of the kingdom, and as many manses or dwellings for its ministers. It has also established schools in almost every parish. And I tell the House with the utmost sincerity that I believe I never questioned any man in Scotland as to the effect of the disruption who did not admit that, painful as it was, and utterly as he and many others might have opposed it, still it has been full of blessings to the people of that country. I believe the number of persons who frequent places of worship, the number of schools, and the number of scholars who attend them, are all far larger than ever they were before the last great secession. Bear in mind that, with the exception of a very few persons of high station in society, including one or two Members of the other House and two or three of this, the property of Scotland, as far as property is to be measured by the possession of the soil, has not gone with the Free Church at all. Yet you find throughout the whole of that country those vast results from a zeal, a religious fervour, a munificence, which are not a whit greater than would be exhibited under the same circumstances by members of the Church of England. But such a state of things,

I say, must raise the character of the people of Scotland, high as it was before, still higher in the estimation of the Christian world.

Only one other point with regard to this voluntary question. Apart from the discussions and divisions, from Bills and clauses in this House, if I were to ask any hon. Member on the other side whether he believed that the Church of England was not, or would not, become as liberal as any other sect, I have no doubt he would at once say that to assert the contrary would be to slander and misrepresent the members of that Church. Well, I think so too, and the evidence lies in what the Church has been doing of late years. If you stand upon any eminence in the neighbourhood of any large town or city in England, you will see everywhere towers and spires indicating the temples that have been raised in recent days for the worship of God; and so also, if you travel over the country, as you now rapidly do, you will see through the glass of the railway carriage one spire here, another there, and a third yonder. I do not always admire their architecture, but some of them are beautiful objects in the landscape of which they form part. Well, this has all been achieved, not by the votes of Parliament, for they have ceased, but by exactly the same religious zeal, the same Christian benevolence, which have distinguished the rest of your countrymen, and which you, the richest and proudest of them all, would surely, under the like circumstances, equally display. I want to persuade you that this is a good Bill for the Established Church. I am not about to try to take you in by allowing you to suppose that I agree with you as to a State Establishment for teaching religion. I agree on that abstract question with Mr. Miall and the Liberation Society. I believe it is an evil to the State and to religion; but that is not a question for us to discuss how, or one which probably this generation will ever be called on to decide. I say, the abolition of these irritating levies of money in Ireland has been of great advantage to the Established Church of Ireland. I say, the more you remove your question of an Establishment from that constant and irritating contest and discussion which are inseparable from the continuance of these rates, the more probably, for a long period of time, you will consolidate your Church; and I am inclined to believe that its fall as a State Establishment will never come from the assaults of those who are without it, but will rather come from the strong differences of doctrine among those within its pale.

I should like to ask hon. Gentlemen opposite to look to a point in respect to which their Church is at a great disadvantage as compared with Dissenting congregations. I am in a position to observe both of them with great impartiality, because I belong to a sect which is very small, which some people say is decaying, although I believe its main principles are always spreading. I have no particular sympathy with Wesleyans, Independents, or Baptists, any more than I have with the congregations which assemble in your churches. But have you not observed in London, and more particularly in the country, where you are more intimately acquainted with the circumstances—have you not observed, that among the congregations of Dissenting bodies there is a greater activity in all matters which belong to their churches, and to objects which they unite together in promoting as a religious community? Do not you find that from the richest and the most influential man who enters a chapel on a Sunday to the humblest of the congregation there is, as it were, a chain of sympathy running through them all, which gives to them a great strength, which combines them together, which influences the humblest and the highest for good, and which gives to the congregation a power which is found to be greatly less existent in a congregation of the Established Church? I have spoken of this to many persons who

may, perhaps, imagine an 'equality' which would allow the Protestant Establishment to remain as it is, or, at least, to continue to be a State Church, building up at its side a Catholic Establishment; and, to complete the scheme, a Presbyterian Establishment also, having a batch of Catholic prelates and of Presbyterian divines in the House of Lords; but, in my opinion, any scheme of 'equality' of this description would be, and must necessarily be, altogether impracticable.

Lord John Russell, I think in 1843, expressed an opinion that the Protestant Church in Ireland should not be subverted, 'but that the Roman Catholic Church, with its bishops and clergy, should be placed by the State on a footing of equality with that Church.' He adopted the term 'equality,' and said that any plan he should propose would be 'to follow out that principle of equality, with all its consequences.' Lord Grey, in 1845, was, if possible, still more explicit, for he said, after expressing his opinion that 'the Catholics have the first claim' on the funds applied to ecclesiastical purposes in Ireland, 'you must give the Catholic clergy an equality also in social rank and position;' and he went even further than this, and said, 'I carry my view on this subject as far as to wish to see the prelates of the Roman Catholic Church take their places in this House on the episcopal bench.' From this it appears that Lord John Russell and Lord Grey, seeing the enormous evil of the existing system, were ready to justify almost any measure that promised political and ecclesiastical equality to the Irish Catholics; but they wished that equality to be obtained without the subversion of the Protestant Established Church in Ireland.

Of course, if all parties among the statesmen and the public of the United Kingdom were agreed, funds might be provided for the perpetual endowment and subjection to State control of the Irish Catholic and Presbyterian Churches, and some plan might be devised to secure them a representation in the House of Lords; but, happily for sound principles in civil government, and happily for religion itself, all parties are not agreed to do this, but are rather agreed that it shall not be done. The 'equality' which Lord John Russell would 'follow out with all its consequences' is a dream, and Lord Grey's bold idea of giving the Irish Catholics 'the first claim to the funds' and of placing their bishops in the House of Lords is not less impracticable. To have two Established Churches in Ireland, the one Protestant and the other Catholic; to have in the House of Lords Protestant and Catholic bishops, elbowing each other on the 'right reverend bench,' guarding the temporal and spiritual interests of two Churches which denounce each other as idolatrous or heretical, would be an inconsistency so glaring, that it would go far to overthrow all reverence for Governments or Churches, if not for Christianity itself. The scheme is surely too absurd to be seriously thought of, and if there be a statesman bold enough to propose it, he will find no support in the opinion of the English public, except from that small section with whom religion goes for nothing, and Churches and priests are tolerated as machinery in the pay and service of the Government.

But there is an 'equality' which is attainable without inconsistency, which would meet with favour among large classes in every part of Great Britain, and which, I think, if fairly proposed, would be well received by many of the more enlightened and just Protestants in Ireland. It is an 'equality' which must start from this point, that henceforth there must be no Church in Ireland in connection with the State. The whole body of English Dissenters, the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and the Catholic population of the United Kingdom, might be expected cordially to welcome such a proposition; and it is difficult to understand how the Presbyterians of the North of Ireland, or the Free Church of Scotland, or the

adherents of the Wesleyan Conference in England, could, with any consistency or decency, oppose it; and I am confident that a large number of persons connected with the Established Churches in the three kingdoms, who are enlightened enough to see what is right, and just enough to wish it to be done, would give their support to any Minister who had the courage to make such a measure the great distinguishing act of his administration. But, if this principle were adopted — that is, the principle that henceforth there must be no Church in Ireland in connection with the State — there would still be a question as to the appropriation of the large funds now in the hands of the Irish Established Church.

There are two modes of dealing with these funds, either of which may be defended, but one of them seems to offer facilities which do not belong to the other. The most simple plan would be to absorb the revenues of the Established Church as the livings become vacant, and to apply them in some channel not ecclesiastical, in which the whole population of Ireland could participate. The objections to this plan are, that it would be hard upon the Protestant Episcopalians, after having pampered them so long with a munificent support, to throw them at once on their resources, and that to withdraw the Regium Donum from the Presbyterians of the North, when they have no other provision made for their religious wants, would be to create a just discontent among them. There is some force in this, inasmuch as upon one generation would be thrown the burden of the creation and support of a religious organisation which, in voluntary churches, is commonly the work of successive generations of their adherents, and the argument may be considered almost irresistible when it is offered to a Government which does not repudiate, but rather cherishes, the principle of a State Church. But whatever may be the inconveniences of this plan, they are, in my estimation, infinitely less than those which are inseparable from a continuance of the present system.

There is, however, another mode of settlement which, though open to some objection, is probably more likely to obtain a general concurrence of opinion in its favour in Ireland, and to which, I think, a great amount of consent might be obtained in England and Scotland. Your present ecclesiastical arrangements are briefly these:—The Protestant Episcopal Church has 500,000*l.* per annum entrusted to it, or a principal sum, at twenty years' purchase, of 10,000,000*l.* sterling. The Presbyterian Church or Churches have 40,000*l.* per annum, or, estimated at the same rate, a principal sum of 800,000*l.* The Roman Catholic Church has 26,000*l.* per annum, or a principal sum of 520,000*l.* I will say nothing about the exact proportions of population belonging to each Church, for I do not wish to give opportunity for dispute about figures. It is sufficient to say, what everybody knows to be true, that the Irish population is Catholic, and that the Protestants, whether of the Episcopalian or Presbyterian Church, or of both united, are a small minority of the Irish people. I will admit the temporary hardship of at once withdrawing from the Protestant sects all the resources which the State has hitherto provided for them; but, at the same time, no one can deny, and I cannot forget, the hardship to which the Catholics have been subjected, inasmuch as they, the poorest portion of the people, and by many times the most numerous, have been shut out from almost all participation in the public funds applied to ecclesiastical purposes in Ireland. Is it not possible to make an arrangement by which the menaced hardship to the Protestants may be avoided, and that so long endured by the Catholics, in part at least, redressed? And can this be done without departing from the principle, 'that henceforth there must be no Church in Ireland in connection with the State?' Let an Act be passed to establish a 'Church Property Com-

mission' for Ireland, and let this Commission hold in trust, for certain purposes, all the tithes and other property now enjoyed by the Established Church; let it, in fact, become possessed of the 10,000,000*l.* sterling, the income from which now forms the revenues of that Church, as the livings and benefices become vacant. It would be desirable to offer facilities to the landed proprietors to purchase the tithes at an easy rate, in order that funds might be in hand to carry out the other arrangements of the scheme.

I have estimated the total value at 10,000,000*l.*; it might not reach that sum if the tithes were sold at a low rate; but whether it were 10,000,000*l.* or only 8,000,000*l.* would not affect the practicability or the justice of this proposition. Let this Commission be empowered and directed to appropriate certain portions of this fund as a free gift to each of the three Churches in Ireland—to the Protestant Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Roman Catholic Church. Whatever is thus given must be a free gift, and become as much the private property of the respective sects or churches as is the property of the Free Church in Scotland, or that of the Wesleyan Methodists in England. It must no longer be a trust from the State, liable to interference or recall by the State, or the 'equality' and independence of the Irish sects will not be secured.

There comes now the question of the amounts to be thus given. From some inquiries I have made I have arrived at the conclusion that if in each parish in Ireland there was a house and a small piece of land, say from ten to twenty acres, in the possession of the Roman Catholic Church, that would be all the provision that would be required or wished for, as the general support of its ministers would be derived, as at present, from the voluntary contributions of their flocks. There are in round numbers about 1,000 parishes in Ireland. In many of them there is now a provision up to the standard above stated in the possession of the Roman Catholic Church, but I will assume that in all of them such provision would have to be made. 1,000*l.* for each parish, taking one parish with another, would amply make up any deficiency, and this amount throughout the parishes of Ireland would require the sum of 1,000,000*l.* sterling to be appropriated from the general fund; and this should be made over absolutely and for ever to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, in such hands and in such manner as the funds of their Church raised by voluntary effort are usually secured.

Under an arrangement of this kind, of course, the special grant to the college of Maynooth would be withdrawn. The Presbyterians, under the operation of this Act, would lose their annual grant of 40,000*l.*; but, in place of it, assuming that they have an organisation and a system of government which would enable them to hold and administer funds for the use of their Church, a portion of the general fund should be set apart for them, equal to the production of a revenue of like amount with that they now receive by grant from Parliament. This should also be given to them absolutely and for ever, and they should become henceforth a voluntary and independent Church.

The Protestant Episcopalians should be treated as liberally as the Presbyterians, with whom, it is estimated, they are about on a par in point of numbers. Assuming that they could and would form themselves into a Free Episcopal Church, the Commission would be empowered to grant them a sum equal to that granted to the Presbyterians, and which would be about the same in amount as that granted to the Catholics. And further, so long as they undertook to keep the churches in repair, they might be permitted to retain possession of them at a nominal rent, for their own use only; and that when or where they had no congregation sufficient to maintain the church, then the buildings should

be at the disposal of the Commission to let or sell, as might be thought best. In the case of the Protestant Episcopalians, as with the Presbyterians and the Catholics, whatever sum is given to them must be given absolutely and for ever, that henceforth they may rely on their own resources and become a voluntary and independent Church.

The State would thus have distributed about 3,000,000*l.* of the original fund, and would have relinquished all claims upon it for ever; and it would be the duty of the Commission to take care that those grants were applied, in the first instance, for the purposes and in the manner intended by the Act. The remaining 5,000,000*l.* or 7,000,000*l.*, as the case might be, might, and in my opinion ought, to be reserved for purposes strictly Irish, and directed to the educational and moral improvement of the people, without respect to class or creed. This fund would extend and perfect the educational institutions of the country; it would establish and endow free libraries in all the chief towns of Ireland, and would dispense blessings in many channels for the free and equal enjoyment of the whole population. Of course there will be objections started to this scheme, as there will be to any scheme which attempts to remedy an injustice which has lasted for centuries. The 'Church party' may, and probably will, denounce it as a plan of spoliation most cruel and unholy; but no man who proposes to remedy Irish ecclesiastical wrongs can expect to find favour with the sect whose supremacy he is compelled to assail. We must hope that State patronage has not so entirely demoralised the members of the Protestant Episcopalian sect, either in England or Ireland, as to leave none among them who are able to see what is just on this question, and who are willing that what is just should be done. I believe there are many intelligent and earnest Churchmen, and some eminent politicians connected with the Established Church, who would welcome almost any proposition which afforded a hope of a final settlement of this question.

From Scotland, and probably from certain quarters in England, we may hear of the great crime of handing over 1,000,000*l.* sterling to the Roman Catholics of Ireland. It will, perhaps, be insisted upon, that to add to the means of a Church whose teaching is held to be 'erroneous' is a grievous national sin; and many will honestly doubt the wisdom of a scheme which proposes such an appropriation of a portion of a great public fund. Now, there is not a man in the United Kingdom more averse to religious endowments by the State than I am. I object to the compulsory levying of a tax from any man to teach any religion, and still more to teach a religion in which he does not believe; and I am of opinion that, to take a Church into the pay of the State, and to place it under the control of the State, is to deaden and corrupt the Church, and to enlist its influence on the side of all that is evil in the civil government. But in the plan now suggested the Irish sects or Churches would be left entirely free, as is the Free Church in Scotland, or the Wesleyan Methodist Church in England. The grants once made, each Church would possess absolutely its own funds, just as much as if they were the accumulations of the voluntary contributions and liberality of past generations of its members, and thus would be avoided the damage to religion and to civil government which is inseparable from what is called the union of Church and State; whilst the sum granted to each Church, being equal to a provision of about 40,000*l.* per annum, would be too small to create any important corporate influence adverse to the public interest.

As to the complaint that the sum of 1,000,000*l.* is proposed to be given to the Irish Catholics, I will ask any man with a head to comprehend and a heart to feel, to read the history of Ireland, not from the time of Henry VIII, but from the accession of William III, and

if he insists upon a settlement of this question by grants to the Protestant sects, and by the refusal of any corresponding *grant to the Roman Catholics*, I can only say that his statesmanship is as wanting in wisdom as his Protestantism lacks the spirit of Christianity. If, for generations, a portion of the Protestants of Ireland, few in number but possessing much wealth, have enjoyed the large ecclesiastical revenues of a whole kingdom; and if, during the same period, the Roman Catholics, the bulk of the population, but possessing little wealth, have been thrown entirely on their own limited resources, and under circumstances of political and social inferiority, can it be possible, when an attempt shall be made to remedy some of the manifold injustice of past times, that any Englishman or any Scotchman will be found to complain of the impartiality of the Government, and, in his zeal for Protestantism, to forget the simple obligations of justice?

But it may be objected that it is contrary to sound policy to make grants of public money to any public body, or corporation, or sect, not submitting to State control—that, in fact, a Church receiving anything from the State should be a State Church. No one is more sensible of the weight and soundness of this argument than I am; but observe the peculiarities of this case. I start from the point that 'henceforth there shall be no Church in Ireland in connection with the State.' I have to free the Protestant Episcopalian sect and the Presbyterians from their State connection; and to make the Irish sects voluntary Churches for the future. I propose an appropriation of about one-third of existing ecclesiastical property in Ireland, with a view to soften the apparent severity of the change to the sects heretofore paid by the State, and to make some amends to that majority of the Irish population, the injustice of whose past treatment is admitted by all the world. The Protestants of Ireland have done hitherto little for themselves, because the bounty of the State has paralysed their exertions, or made exertion unnecessary. The Catholics have done much for themselves; but they are in *great poverty, and our existing ecclesiastical* legislation has been felt, and is now felt, by them to be grievously unjust. Would it not be worth the concession of the sum I have suggested, and of the deviation from ordinary rule which I venture to recommend, to obtain the grand result which is contemplated by the change now proposed? I have said that there will be objections to this scheme and to every scheme. The grievance is centuries old, and around it are entwined interests, prejudices, fanaticism, animosities, and convictions. It is a desperate evil, and whoever waits till the remedy is pleasant to everybody may and will wait for ever. The object in view is the tranquillity of Ireland. The means are simple, but altogether novel in that unhappy country—to do full and impartial justice to her whole population. I propose to leave the Presbyterians as well circumstanced as they are now, with this exception, that all future extension of their organisation must be made at their own cost; and I would place the Protestant Episcopalians in as good a position as the Presbyterians. The Catholics only could have any ground of complaint, owing to their numbers so far exceeding those of the Protestant sects; but in the application of the remainder, and much the largest portion of the funds, for educational or other purposes, they would participate exactly in proportion to their numbers; and I have a strong belief that, so far as they are concerned, such an arrangement as is now suggested would be accepted as a final settlement of a most difficult and irritating question.

As you know, I am neither Roman Catholic, Protestant Episcopalian, nor Presbyterian, nor am I an Irishman. My interest in this matter is not local or sectarian. I have endeavoured to study it, and to regard it as becomes an Englishman loving justice and freedom, anxious for the tranquillity of

Ireland, the welfare of the Empire, and the honour of the Imperial Government. I believe that statesmanship does not consist merely in preserving institutions, but rather in adapting them to the wants of nations, and that it is possible so to adapt the institutions of Ireland to the wants and circumstances of Ireland, that her people may become as content as the people of England and Scotland are, with the mild monarchy under which we live. Some experience and much reflection have convinced me that all efforts on behalf of industry and peace in Ireland will be in great part unavailing until we eradicate the sentiment which is universal among her Catholic population—that the Imperial Government is partial, and that to belong to the Roman Catholic Church is to incur the suspicion or the hostility of the law. A true 'equality' established among the Irish sects would put an end to this pernicious but all-pervading sentiment; and Catholics, whether priests or laymen, would feel that the last link of their fetters was at length broken. Supremacy on the one hand, and a degrading inferiority on the other, would be abolished, and the whole atmosphere of Irish social and political life would be purified. Then, too, Christianity would appeal to the population, not as a persecuting or a persecuted faith, with her features disfigured by the violence of political conflict, but radiant with the divine beauty which belongs to her, and speaking with irresistible force to the hearts and consciences of men.

I know not if the statesman be among us who is destined to settle this great question, but whoever he may be he will strengthen the monarchy, earn the gratitude of three kingdoms, and build up for himself a lasting renown. I am sensible that in writing this letter, and in expressing the views it contains, I run the risk of being misunderstood by some honest men, and may subject myself to misrepresentation and abuse. It is under a solemn sense of duty to my country, and to the interests of justice and religion, that I have ventured to write it. I have endeavoured to divest myself of all feeling of preference for, or hostility to, any of the Churches or sects in Ireland, and to form my judgment in this matter upon principles admitted by all true statesmanship, and based on the foundations of Christian justice. If I should succeed in directing the attention of any portion of those most deeply interested to some mode of escape from the difficulties with which this question is surrounded, I shall willingly submit to the suspicions or condemnation of those who cannot concur with me in opinion. I wish this long letter were more worthy of its purpose. As it is, I send it to you, and you may make whatever use of it you think will be likely to serve the cause of 'religious equality' in Ireland.

Believe me to be, very truly yours,

JOHN BRIGHT.

ROCHDALE,
October 25, 1852.

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